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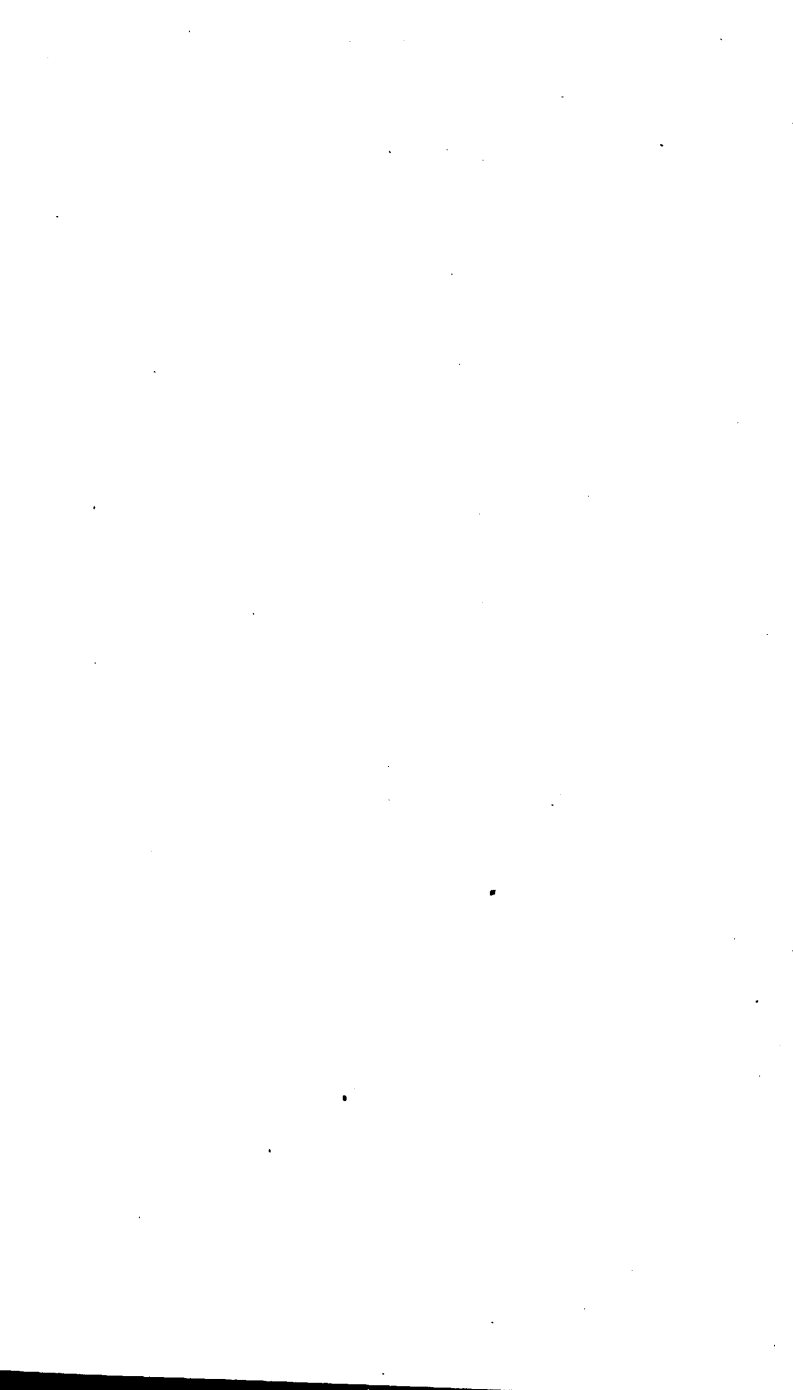
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The Local Church

Its Present and Future

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By

FREDERICK A. AGAR

*Author of "The Competent Church," "Church
Officers," etc.*



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Preface

It is not the purpose of this volume to attack the church of today, but rather to examine it fearlessly and impartially in an attempt to promote its cause and its future, and help it to meet the criticisms of its enemies.

In order to avoid some forms of censure that would result if the discussion were wholly critical, constructive methods are constantly kept before the mind of the reader.

The study that the volume contains must, therefore, stand or fall upon its own merits rather than upon any position or reputation that the writer may possess.

Suffice it to say, that the author is wholly in sympathy with what is generally termed Christianity, and that the Church, both Universal and Local, is to him an object of veneration and pride. His only desire is that its work may be advanced to the utmost.

The book aims to present a true picture of present-day, general conditions. Although churches differ very widely in different localities, and there are many types of local churches, every church will find that this is a true picture, in certain particulars, of its institution.

That some earnest Christians will disagree with the author's presentation, is a foregone conclusion, but, if the disagreement leads either the reader or the author to come to a new and correct understanding of the church and its mission, the Cause will be helped. Some repetition has been indulged in for the sake of emphasis.

Questions covering each chapter will be found at the end of the volume. This feature may add to the value of the book when used for the basis of a study class.

The one great desire of the writer is to further the aims and purposes of the Founder and Head of the Church, for he believes this to be his mission in the world of today.

F. A. A.

New York City.

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I

JUSTIFYING CONTINUANCE

A Frank Question—A question concerning the Church is being constantly asked today. It is this, "Is the Church justified by its organization and character in continuing to fill its recognized place of unique power in the world?"

The question ought to be faced frankly, because, unless it is faced and answered, the local church organizations will continue to confront more and more difficulties and loss of prestige. Armed with facts based upon careful scrutiny and candid recognition of success or failure, it will continue to grow in usefulness. It is proposed, therefore, to review the whole question in this volume from a constructive viewpoint.

First of all, let us look at the qualities and powers that would justify the claim of any local church to a position of authority in its community, and constitute its claim to the whole-hearted support of its membership.

Spirituality—Perhaps the first justification for the continuation of any local church lies in its spirituality. Spirituality is not to be thought of as something unreal or intangible, but as a factor in any common sense everyday life. It is nothing more nor less than the proper relationship of things or people to the plans and purposes of God in Jesus Christ. Spirituality is not a matter of dogma or phrase-making, but it is essentially a matter of living rightly with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That person is spiritual, therefore, whose life is lived in harmony with God through a faith in Jesus Christ. The main and, therefore, the great purpose of the local

church is to be a fountain of spiritual energies and emanations. In this field it has no rival. There is no other organization or institution, unless it be a subsidiary of the Church, which has as its sole purpose, the relating of people through right living, with the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Mankind unceasingly needs spiritual life and spiritual power. Through the Church, this demand can be met by the fellowship of Christians, the preached Word, the prayer life, unselfish ministries to people in need, and the dynamic presence of the spirit of God.

The Contrasts—The world outside the Church is full of a gaiety called pleasure, but which brings pain and anguish in its train. When the church-members are truly spiritual, they know how to play and laugh so as to enjoy life without destroying its bloom. The world outside may be full of rivalries and business importunities which leave the mind weary and the body weak, but the Church, if true to its purpose, will give that spiritual tonic which brings back such balance and poise that God is honored in all business affairs, and life is ennobled by victory.

The world outside may be a place where the gaunt spectre of sin and sickness, death and the grave, is constantly flaunting its grim victories, but in the Church, the Conqueror of sin can always be found, a Saviour and Lord who overcomes evil in the lives of those who walk with Him. He takes away the mystery of death and removes the shadows of the grave for all who are His. The world outside is frankly seeking its own ends and is full of hatreds and jealousies, but wherever the church is true to the principles and practices of the Lord and Master, all these are banished and there is built up a great brotherhood in Christ that knows no race nor color and whose guiding and eternal principle is the abiding love of the Saviour.

Why Go To Church?—It follows that people will find in the church, the experienced Word of Truth, the usable prayer spirit, the unselfish service and the joy of

the Lord. Upon these dynamic things spiritual power is built and maintained. People go to church for spiritual uplift, hence the future of the church depends upon its possession of and ministry in things spiritual. Coming from God, they can only be found by earnestly seeking after Him. People go to the theater because they wish to be amused; they go to a restaurant for food; thus in all the needs and desires of life, there is a place where people expect to find what they are after. In just as definite a way, people go to church because the spiritual urge of their lives demands sustenance and help. Woe be to the church that is asked for bread and proffers a stone!

Love and Fellowship—Continuance of any local church is justified again by a brotherly love and Christian fellowship. A church that exemplifies love and fellowship justifies its maintenance. No other group or institution is constituted solely to produce and maintain a genuine brotherly love and practical unselfish fellowship. "How those Christians love one another" was the comment made concerning the Early Church. It should still remain one of the distinguishing and notable characteristics of the true Church of today. At a recent gathering of members in a local church, there were present at that meeting members who had come into the fellowship of that church from nineteen states and eleven foreign countries, with a consequent variety of personalities and habits of procedure. Yet under the spirit of Christ, excellent harmony, spiritual peace, and good fellowship ruled in every heart.

Internationalism—The right to future as well as present maintenance is further demonstrated by a Christian internationalism which finds expression in a missionary passion and program. The world purpose of Christ in seeking to save *all* peoples, when launched and worthily carried out by any local church, is splendid justification for future maintenance.

No other group or institution has such a world program

based upon unstinted giving of self, to save for time and eternity known, unknown, and alien races of people. It is this missionary passion that creates in the souls of the membership, the spirit of Christian adventure, of sacrificial service, of untiring devotion, of dependence upon the Unseen One, and of loving fellowship that characterized the Saviour. He holds out the assurance of conquered sin and uplifted men and women. In His presence and with His help, spiritual life is experimentally true. There is ample justification for the continuance and growth of those local churches that manifest a missionary spirit by a world participation in Christian service. The production of money without a corresponding measure of personal missionary enlistment will not suffice.

Self-Giving—The right of any local church to continued existence gains further proof from the manifestations of self-giving without any expectation of return *in kind*. As Christ gave Himself, the just for the unjust, so the spiritually minded church-member will follow the example of his Lord by giving of all the powers and possessions that belong to his life without thought of return. In like manner the church of which he is a member will practise self-giving. There is no other group or institution in this world whose chief aim and purpose is to give and continue to give the treasures of life without expectation of material return. Such, however, is the real purpose of a true local church, and in its spiritual giving is found an added reason why the church should be maintained.

Its Justification—The spiritual purpose of the Church contrasted with the materialism of the world, its love and fellowship contrasted with the hates and fears of the world, its internationalism with its peace and Christian love in contrast with wars and national or group greed, and finally its unselfish self-giving contrasted with the urge of self-aggressiveness—it is in such contrasts of life as these that the local church finds its justification for future as well as present usefulness and growth. Just in

so far as the local church exhibits these characteristics, and produces lives illumined with the personality of Jesus, is there justification for its existence.

God Needs Us—God needs us. Those words tell a most wonderful truth. The omnipotent God and owner of all life and things has so planned His affairs that Christian people are essential to His program. This fact carries with it one of the most stupendous opportunities belonging to mankind. In the presence of this opportunity, all believers stand today to give account of their stewardship. To fail God now is to thwart the divine purposes. For the sake of the One who loved us, as well as for the sake of those who profess to love Him "because He first loved," the purposes of God in this world of today and tomorrow must surely be the first and great objective of our life and its stewardship. By its educational program, its missionary outlook, and its nurture of the spiritual life, the local church helps the individual to more worthily coöperate with God. That is splendid justification for the continuance of the local group.

Needed Today—God needs us today. It is said with all humility and yet with a sense of the great honor bestowed upon all by the great and omnipotent Creator. Surely no one will lightly pass by the opportunity to serve Him whom the angels of heaven would gladly honor. The chance to serve is ours now. Reverently we say that God has limited Himself to the plan which demands our participation. If we fill the need and meet the opportunity we shall preserve the honor as well as the plan of God. Our sense of honor demands that we fulfill our stewardship to the full extent of our powers, and that we do it without delay.

If we should fail when God needs us and depends upon us, then someone else will serve God to fulfill His plans and purposes, for His purposes cannot fail. But those who fail God will be like the steward of old who took his talent and hid it in a napkin and buried it in the ground.

The failure will be fraught with tremendous consequences to those who have professed to love God enough to help Him in His need, and have then belied their profession by refusing to keep faith with Him. We will help Him now, for tomorrow is uncertain and the needs of today must be met today. Best of all, we will help Him because of the urge of a great and abiding love for Him and His. Therein is found the final justification for any local church that it aids in producing God's helpers.

Common-sense Idealism—It is often said that the Christian Church is foolish in its idealism, but it must be remembered that an ideal is a goal to be reached, and becomes a reality only when the idealist strives to attain it. Ideals are odd because they only work when the idealist works them.

The Person of Christ—Not in its great and magnificent edifices, its splendid organs and choirs, its stately rituals and worldly pomp does the local church find justification for continued existence. The world outside the churches has splendid buildings, marvellous organs and massed singers, and the pomp and vainglory of many a procession and ritual. Not in its list of members, among whom are numbered many of the world's great men and women, does the local church find its justification. The outside world has such men and women in equal or greater numbers. The local church finds its real justification in the cross of Christ, an emblem of shame and death. The real dynamic for continuation and growth of the church is found in the person and personality of the Man of Sorrows, who had not where to lay His head, and who was despised and rejected of men, but who loved, lived, and died that mankind might be saved from sin and shame. When any church brings mankind into spiritual apprehension and common sense living relationships with the Christ, it has found its justification for being and continuing. The one and only real hope for world brotherhood, for a fellowship regardless of human limitations of class, creed or wealth is found

in the Person of Christ and just in so far as any church lives and communicates these attributes of His, it has found its highest justification for being and continuing. The Church must be spiritual like the Christ. It must justify itself by bearing its own cross as Christ bore His.

How far short of the mark the average local church falls in reaching these ideals that should justify its continuance, we shall candidly seek to discover and set forth without evasion or excuse. In like manner, its successes in reaching them will be pointed out. It is to be hoped that some things of practical value may be discussed which will enable the institution to work out its ideals and to demonstrate plainly that in seeking God it seeks the highest and best and that it is willing to pay a real price to attain Him.

II

THE STRENGTH OF A CHURCH

The Church Universal—It is fascinating to consider the strength of the Church Universal. No matter to what branch of it an individual may belong, there comes a delightful sense of being part of a tremendous multitude which has influenced, and will continue to influence, the immortal souls of countless throngs. There is in every human heart a desire to be more than mortal, and the Church Universal with its divine origin and its spiritual maintenance visualizes the divine and the eternal to every true Christian. Therein lies its fundamental strength. It is a Church composed of the peoples of every age, nation, clime and condition, and at once and completely envelops the whole range of human brotherhood and internationalism.

In the midst of wars and strife, the Church assumes a new and peculiar responsibility in teaching love, the guiding principle of life, as a counter and foil for racial hatreds. Therein again lies the strength of the Church Universal.

Although tangible in its component parts called local churches, yet to many people it is often intangible and mystic because of its divine origin and maintenance. This very mysticism is a contributing factor to the strength of the Church through its appeal to the spiritual as against the gross and material appeal of the world.

The Person of Christ—Perhaps the chief element in the strength of the Church Universal lies in the person and life of its founder and chief exponent, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. His origin, sinless life, un-

paralleled work, priceless sacrifice and painful death, His victory over the grave, followed by His exaltation again to the Father's presence, constitute the greatest fountain-head of power which the Church has now or ever has had since its inception. It is in the person of Christ and through the ever present witness of His Spirit that the power of the Church Universal will remain. It will continue to grow in power and influence under the dynamic of His continued presence. The Church Universal will grow regardless of what may happen to the local churches.

However fascinating such a consideration of the sources of strength of the Church Universal may be, we must leave unwritten the major part of what might be said about it while we pass on to a consideration of the strength and success of the local churches.

What Constitutes Success?—What do thinking church-members count as constituting a successful church? Certainly, to insure success, it is not essential to procure a crowd to hear the preaching of a popular minister. It is not adding a host of mere names to the membership rolls of the church. It is not to raise so much money that the church is always out of debt. It is not to be known as a church where there exists nothing but peace. It is not to be the center of publicity stunts that describe feats of sensational pieces of work or entertainment for the delectation of an outside public. It is not to possess the handsomest church edifice and the finest choir in the community. Some, or all of these things may be found in a successful church, but all of them without loving brotherly or sisterly spiritual ministries are but empty shells and hollow mockeries.

A successful church is one where the inner spiritual life of pastor and people constantly enables them to reveal their Christian love. Then the whole world about them cannot withstand the effects of their loving persistent self-sacrificing ministries. That is success. It will nearly always be accompanied by several of the other effects,

but even if none of them are present, the church that loves and ministers is an unqualified success.

Love is seldom passive; it is mainly dynamic and self-spending. Personal Christianity and organized Christianity must both be remembered as factors in the strength or weakness of any and every local church. Some strong Christian characters are entirely unused by local church organizations. The very fact that they are strong characters causes some local bodies to let them remain unused. The prevalence of the office-holding habit, when one individual holds two or more offices to the exclusion of other people who might be appointed to fill one of the two, makes it impossible for the organized group to profit by the labors of some strong Christian characters. On the other hand, the organized forces of Christianity are often hampered by the fact that their forces are without the presence and participation of some who proclaim themselves adherents of Christ but will not link themselves up with His Church. The personal life of individual Christians and the organized forces of the Church must both alike learn to use and be used by the other.

The Spirit of Truth—The chief source of power and present strength of any local church is in its possession and use of the personal attributes and powers derived from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can be a substitute for Christlike living; not even the Word of God, because its great purpose is simply to bring people to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. If, therefore, the revelation of God is real in the life of the believer, it creates a desire to live like the One revealed. A church reveals this characteristic through the lives of its members.

The Law of Love—A further cause of strength and success is found in the communion of saints while they worship, work, witness and give to promote a Christian brotherhood, with the sole motive of Christian self-giving. The Church differs from all other organizations in its purpose to fulfill the law of love through the operation of

a spiritually-minded brotherhood. Two examples will illustrate this self-giving:

There is a church that surveyed its community to discover how many people were living "shut-in" lives. They found seventy-four individuals whose lives were passed within the four walls of a building, and many of them lived all their time within the four walls of one room. Too often it was a cheerless, badly lighted room. Using the children with their happy faces and merry voices, their songs and atmosphere of play, the church put into the lives of those shut-ins a new hope and cheer. There is revealed here the latent possibilities of a ministry for any and every church that is willing to serve in love and without the prospect of any material return in added membership or money. Then, too, the value of such work was revealed in the reactions that came into the lives of the children who were taught by experience to be thoughtful and helpful for others. Such a church as the one initiating this or similar service, needs no further justification for its continuation beyond the very real Christian service it is rendering.

A girl came out of a bedraggled, slatternly home with its discouraged, beaten mother and drunken father, and joined a class in the Bible School. Here she found a teacher sent of God and other girls who helped her to find herself in spite of all her home handicaps. Soon she was converted and joined the church, and her character developed to the place where a worthwhile man loved her and was loved in return.

When it came time for the wedding, it was impossible to have it in the home, for the dissipated father might come back at any time and the mother was unable to stem the tide of her discouragement even under such circumstances. So the minister and church-members proposed to use the homelike atmosphere of the church parlors and the house of God became, in the life of that girl, not only a place of worship, but a household of loving friends

where the joy of good living and love could find a start. Such an atmosphere justifies any local church in maintaining itself in any community. Just in proportion as a local church exemplifies this spirit, it has strength and influence.

The Minister—Again, the strength of the church is in part the result of the labors of its ministers. As a great group of earnest, loving, self-sacrificing men, there is no parallel to them in any other sphere of activity. Taken as a whole, they constitute an unfailing source of Christian example and Christlike living. Whether as pastor or missionary, they have constantly pioneered for their cause in the strange and lonely, or crowded and needy places of the world's frontiers. Oftentimes the banner of the Cross has opened the way into places where commerce could not have found a lodgment but for the presence and influence of the minister of the Gospel.

It is true that conditions have changed and that the minister does not fill the same place in the life of the community which his predecessors did, but he still fills a unique and tremendously important place in the complex life of today. Wherever a really competent man realizes the possibilities of his ministry, his influence will increase, in spite of difficulties and imperfections within his own organization, and structural changes in the life to which his church must minister. A spiritual minister contributes much to the success of a church, and there are many of them today.

Into All the World—Another source of strength in the life of the average local church is its internationalism, evidenced by its missionary program and local operations. The highest law of love bids us "do good to all men," and thus links those far away with those who cross our own doorsteps. The consequent vision of world enlistment and practical brotherhood has an immense spiritual, psychological, and practical effect upon the hearts and lives of the membership. Many churches, today, dip

deeply into the missionary needs of their community and fill a large place in world service.

The Church Building—A further source of strength lies in the visible church edifice with its constant reminder to all who see it that the Gospel lives, and men and women and children are constantly being besought to desert sin and accept the Saviour. It is a demonstrated fact that the presence of a church provides safety and stability for commercial pursuits and for the maintenance of decent home life and family relations.

Lay Leaders—One of the mainstays of the church is its splendid group of lay men and women. Usually the leading lay spirits in the commercial, educational and social life of the community are members of the church. *In so far as they live in the higher realm of life*, just so ineffaceably will they set their impress upon the life of the community. At the same time they can bring into the church, from other circles, methods that will make the church more successful. This is being done in many cases and the churches feel the result in the higher standard accorded them in the community.

The Children—The children of the church need to be remembered as its future hope. Their potentiality along religious lines is immeasurable. Considering the possibilities offered by the more improved educational facilities which local churches are using, it would seem safe to prophesy that the children of today will become leaders of marked power and influence in the church of tomorrow. Today much is being done for the child by many churches.

Perhaps there are few things in the world of today, outside of the home, that has more appeal to immature child life than has the church, and the reflex action of child interest in the local church constitutes one of the sources of its strength. Additions to church membership are largely from the children in the church schools.

Destroy Sin Traps—Although feebly at times, yet often with power, churches have protested against the wrong

use of the Lord's Day, the liquor traffic, and other sins that would tend to lower the standards of the community. Wherever that has been done with wisdom and *with a program of reconstruction in mind*, the strength of the church has been increased. There is still power in a "voice crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths plain.'" It is part of Christianity to destroy the sin-traps just as Jesus drove out the money-changers from the Temple.

Co-operation—This discussion of the strength of the local church would not be complete without an allusion to the growing spirit of co-operation between some of the various communions in the communities where heretofore unwise competition and often unchristian opposition existed between churches of different sects. Elsewhere the lack of co-operation is emphasized. It is a source of increasing strength to all that many groups are learning more and more to work side by side in Christian fellowship.

Evangelism—Another promising source of strength is the increasing evidence that the local churches are giving serious attention to the matter of personal enlistment. Evangelistic meetings are taking on a quieter form and are followed by intensive efforts to train the new convert in a life of worship, service, witnessing and giving. Therefore, educational processes are being improved and enlarged, not as a substitute for evangelism, but as an adjunct to it.

A Progressive Attitude—The churches of today are generally awake to the problems of the immediate future. While their well known spirit of conservatism has not been entirely banished, and a reactionary or traditional spirit is still found to some extent, the churches of today are doing much that is worth while to prepare for a bigger and better local church of tomorrow. They are taking on a progressive attitude toward new and superior methods of organization and enlistment. The spirit of Christian

adventure, wherever found, is of genuine worth in estimating the success of a church.

A Participating Membership—In the future, the local church bids fair to have a more definite expectation of the participation of all its membership. Church membership must really mean something. The inner circle of the average church is, today, really giving a good witness for the saving grace of the Lord Jesus, but this cannot be said concerning the larger outer circle in the churches. The strength of the church of tomorrow will be in its spiritual ministries, which being properly organized and personally carried out, will reach out in unselfish service to meet the needs of humanity. The church of the future must pay the necessary price in labor, talent, personality and money to help win the great battle for Christ. The sacrificial Cross must again be the sublime power of attraction to every Christian. Jesus' prophecy, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," will then indeed be fulfilled.

III

THE WEAKNESS OF A CHURCH

Discipleship—The question is raised here: Has the average church some inherent weaknesses? If so, are they known, and can they be eradicated? If this were an idle question asked for the purpose of finding fault with the most important institution utilizing human endeavor, it would be a waste of time and energy. This chapter will attempt to do some constructive work on behalf of one of the necessary parts of the divine machinery which wields so potent an influence over the destinies of mankind, individual and collective. The Church was designed as a vehicle for the use and discipline of all people and particularly its own members. The word *discipline* presupposes the word *disciple*. A disciple is a disciplined follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus sets forth quite plainly what it means to be a disciple. It is the duty of the Church to produce a disciplined membership through the processes of nurture and culture of every individual professor. To train a disciple of the Cross is no easy task, but it is essential to the Kingdom, the local church and the saved soul, that the technique of spiritual living become a part of the whole life. Spiritual processes will then become daily practices. Prayer, ministries, love of fellowmen, and self-giving would thus gradually become natural habits of every-day life. One great weakness of the average local church is that the theory of such a life is very generally accepted but no determined attempt at practice is generally made. This failure to practice in daily living the ideals of the Christian life, is at the root of most of the failures dealt with in this chapter. Almost

half the members of the average church exhibit this failure in a greater or less degree.

A Sad Story—There is no joy in the writing or the reading of this part of this book. The feeling of the author is much the same as when he found it necessary to write a letter, many years ago, telling another member of the family that a brother was seriously afflicted and might be lost to the family circle.

Ignorance—The local church membership is seriously afflicted with a great ignorance, and in consequence, hundreds and thousands of spiritual brothers and sisters are lost to the fellowship of service.

Many church-members do not know the simple fellowship duties of a church-member and consequently make no attempt to fulfill these obligations. While the church is largely to blame for such a state of affairs, a great deal of blame attaches to any man or woman who unites with an institution or organization, and is content to remain in ignorance of its united purposes and obligations. Moral as well as spiritual blight follows upon the heels of such wilful ignorance.

Most church-members are ignorant concerning the duties of a minister and consequently they expect the impossible and the unwise from their relationship to his office and ministry. "The preacher must please us." "He must make his pulpit ministry entertaining." "He must be kept in a place of financial dependence." Ignorance has often led to his failure, and being of human structure the force of local church precedents and circumstances has made his failure become the failure of the church.

Many are ignorant concerning the missionary tasks and obligations of the Church. The majority of church-members prove by their actions that they do not know that Christ's world plan is a mandate and not a matter of personal volition. The simple command of the Lord and Master was: "Go ye." But the whole tenor of church

procedure is to confirm the ignorance of the individual, and so he goes on his way disobedient to the heavenly command. After a while, experience in many cases seems to indicate that the weight of this disobedience produces convincing proof that the individual was never born again, but was only a "taster" of divine truth. Giving to missions is not in and of itself necessarily a saving act, but it would seem to be necessarily the act of a saved soul. But giving is not a substitute for personal service when such service is possible.

Fruits of the Spirit—When it is remembered that a child of God is known by his fruits, the appalling ignorance of many a church member is seen in the failure to develop a prayer life, a Bible-reading habit, the habit of public worship, the weekly giving of money on a basis of prosperity, and finally the habit of family worship. As an institution, the local church is a part of the divine plan, but due to ignorant slothfulness, its human factors bring it into temporary disrepute and partial failure.

It is not intended to put up any unreal church-member before the fancy while writing these words. It is well known that due to a lack of education, which has produced spiritual degeneracy, half of our enrolled church members practically never worship, two-thirds of them give practically nothing for missionary purposes, half or more of them contribute nothing for local church support, and two-thirds of them render the church to which they belong no form of personal service from the beginning to the end of successive years.

Attendance at Worship—It must be remembered that there has been, in recent years, a marked decrease in attendance by members of the average local church in spite of a large increase in the number of members belonging to the organization. Many church leaders try to blame this state of affairs upon the conditions that prevail in the world outside of the church, but it seems, upon careful study, to be due to conditions inside the institution where

unspiritual life rules. In many a church there is a lack of brotherly love and people have been rushed in ignorance into some obligations which were not understood when they supposedly agreed to undertake them. The fact must be faced that some churches are crowded all the time. Such churches can be found all over America, (and some of them are not served by noted preachers, nor do they have great buildings or fine choirs), in which there is spiritual power in the simple ministries of the body and an abiding love in the fellowship of the people. The average church, however, has increased its numbers, but lost its power to develop in spiritual grace and poise the added members.

Education—When the word *education* is used, there is no thought of any process that can take the place of spiritual new-birth or regeneration, but there is in mind all those habit-forming, mind-enlarging, spirit-developing, pedagogic processes that bring into the heart, soul and mind, the knowledge of what is the way and the will of God.

The task of the local church, as an institution, is in part to give that knowledge to all its membership. The duty of the pastor is to lead the church he serves in the business of acquiring that knowledge so that they may be prepared to win a lost world. The duty of each and every member is to seek and find that knowledge of God's way and will which will enable him to grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The local church faces a hard task to make an ignorant church membership know and then do the will of God, but this is the task that confronts it today. Nothing else can take the place of a knowledge of this way and will of God. If some know that way better than others, the way to greater growth lies in their teaching it to others, and for that purpose the local church was instituted. Departments of the church are organized for certain purposes of the church such as the education of individuals through

natural grouping. Too often the group becomes self-sufficient. It often becomes a substitute for the whole, called the church. Thus the unit is destroyed and a segment becomes a separate entity, a law unto itself.

The Women's Organization—The women's organization in a local church may be described as the church at work, utilizing its womenfolk in the cultivation of the women and children, for all Kingdom purposes. Its work should not be hampered or prevented by the necessity of raising any money for regular church or mission purposes.

The purposes lying behind the formation of a women's organization in a local church should be first, to help the church do certain great tasks in a co-operative way which cannot be done very well by single individuals. Such a task is the evangelization of the world or the regeneration of a city. The second purpose should be to act as an educational and inspirational force upon all elements in the local church and especially upon those that are backward or uninterested; thus using for this purpose what is admittedly the most progressive, intelligent and spiritual group in the church.

The third purpose should be to furnish greater dynamic for individual lives by reason of the group activities carried on in the interest of those outside the group. We grow largely through doing for others. Other departments such as the Young People's group or the church school have their own particular objectives.

Money versus People—These are great purposes whether viewed singly or as a whole, and they furnish abundant reason why the women's organization should be strengthened and maintained for the sake of the church, in the most efficient manner possible. But it must be under the direct control of the whole church. In the future, the women's local organization will have a much larger sphere of usefulness because it will drop its unwise and harmful money-raising activities and do its legitimate work along ministry, educational and inspirational lines.

Both phases of work cannot be carried on successfully at one and the same time. A casual survey of present conditions will readily reveal the truth of this statement. In the past the average women's organization has done a great deal of money-raising and a little educational work. Today, less than a third of the women in the ordinary local church have any relation to the world program of Christ's Kingdom, even by the personal contribution of money. And it is beyond controversy that less than ten per cent. are doing personal missionary service in connection with the many opportunities that lie before the door of the church. Less than twenty per cent. are students in the mission study groups in the average church. Viewed as a whole, the womanhood of the usual local church is less than twenty-five per cent. missionary.

Church Officers—In confronting another phase of the conditions that prevail in the average local church, the fact cannot escape notice that many officials hold places of responsibility in the churches, who do not perform the duties of their office. Very likely the writer will be charged with a lack of tact, but it is wise and necessary to ask if pastors are not in a large measure to blame for the prevalence of this condition. How many pastors have trained their lay officers to fill their office in a worthy way?

How many theological seminaries have trained their students in order to enable them to train their church officials in Biblical modern church ways? (This is discussed more at length in a subsequent chapter.)

How long do you think it would take the colonel of a regiment to find out about the competency of his officers? Are the pastors afraid of their officials and therefore refrain from any effort to change the conditions that exist in the average church? Or are they ignorant of what constitutes the duties of their various lay officers? In connection with the pastoral office, ignorance concerning such a matter is just as culpable as fear. Many a pastor and his easy-going friends will indignantly deny that igno-

rance or fear enters into the handling of the situation. Then what is the cause of lay official impotence? Is the average pastor lazy or is he headed in the wrong direction as far as his own official duties are concerned? Does he still think that he is a hired man, hired to please the people and to do the work of the church so that the members need not serve and the officials will have someone over whom to exercise authority?

The Pastor—Human nature is taken into account, and full sympathy is felt for the average pastor who has to deal with it at close range in his pastoral duties, but a sufficiently large proportion of ministers have produced competent officials to show that *it can be done anywhere* despite human nature. Therefore, it is to be feared that the cause of failure in many a church is the pastor.

Our Group Stewardship—Now face the other side of the situation, the lay officers' part in the life and work of the church. Kingdom and spiritual concerns, if they are genuine, must have *the first place* in the life of a believer. Yet hundreds of churches are running on a minimum basis, half the membership cannot be found, the pastor is underpaid, the building is in disrepair, the finances are behind, the missionary money is not produced and a very large part of the membership are *both spiritually and morally* pauperized because a few members meet all the bills. Scripture teaches that "There is that which withholdeth that tendeth to poverty." Meanwhile, the offices are largely filled by men and women who are successful in the enterprises which they conduct in the business world, in the lodge realm, and in social circles.

Trained Church Officers—Despite all objections, it must be admitted that local church offices must be filled with people who are well versed in the duties of their office and receive competent direction from their God-sent leader, the pastor. But now comes the evasive excuser saying: "Those men and women officers will not allow their pastor to train them." We do not blame the lay

officers if they can truly say they know more about the office than does the pastor, but a wide-awake pastor will soon learn all that the older officers can teach him, and be competent to help them instruct all new officials, and before long, because he is to lead them, he will know more on this subject than any of his officers. This matter has been discussed frankly with leading laymen and pastors and the almost universal testimony is that worthwhile lay people filling church offices are eager to get as definite training as possible in order to help them fulfill their duties. The lay officers agree that they ought either to get really into the duties of the office, or get out of the office. No red-blooded Christian man or woman filling a church office will get out, but every one of them will join with their pastor and get into their official duties in such a way as to help make the church a militant, missionary, ministering membership force at home and abroad. This has been done. It is being done in many places today. It can be done anywhere. Let all who love the Lord help to do it now in their own church.

War—The failure of the churches to prevent war indicates a weakness. War is unspiritual. The Head of the Church Universal came to bring peace on earth and good will among men. With more than half the population of this country enrolled in the membership or congregations of the various churches, their voice made no impressive demand for peace when war threatened. Nor has much constructive work been done by the churches to establish permanent peace since war ended. As usual, plenty of resolutions have been passed, much talk indulged in, but nothing conclusive has been done. The same conditions confronted other countries where the church and state are united and where the churches enroll multitudes of citizens. The leading statesmen of practically every land during the World War held active membership in some church which acknowledges the Prince of Peace as its Head.

Is it because the churches are at war with each other that they have lost the right to speak with compelling power about the abolition of war between nations? Does not the word of God teach that if one would lay an offering before the God of peace, enmities must be ended in the heart and life of the giver before the offering is acceptable or effective?

The Spirit of Peace—Communities or denominations, made up of local churches, are not at peace with one another. Between many of the leaders of some communities there are personal friendships, working agreements, and much accord. Among other leaders there is no real harmony. When this matter of accord is sifted down to local fields, a very harmful spirit of rivalry and unwise competition is often found. No individual or institution can command peace beyond, when within itself it has the spirit of war, and is engaged in warlike competition. The Christian Church member must vote in accord with his prayers.

Organic Union—This is not a veiled plea for organic union. Organic union is not essential now to the situation as it exists, but a working agreement is essential to real peace and progress. Families live in peace and helpfulness with one another as separate organized units, and all churches likewise could live together in peace and cooperation as separate organized units. Much progress has been made in the direction of accord in recent years, but the churches are still often antagonistic to each other. Some of the denominations that talk most about organic union are the farthest away from it because what they seek is not a union with others, but the arrogant assumption that they are the only true Church, and all others must come to them and be absorbed in them. Churches are still divided into very many different and differing groups. There are a number of groups of Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Methodists, for instance, and sometimes it is hard to keep these different groups at peace

with one another. This is a great cause of weakness among the churches.

Churches have perfect principles, but many poor practices. They adopt many high-sounding resolutions which they have not the resolution to try to execute. They give the world outside many noble precepts which outworn precedents prevent them from practising themselves to any appreciable extent.

Brotherly Love—Something is wrong with the churches when they cannot promote brotherly love. It is still true that thousands of people outside of organized church life reverence the Lord Jesus Christ and give Him, as a Saviour and Brother, their heart's allegiance. Yet those same people will despise and reject the churches and will "carry on" outside their pale even though the church-members are supposed to be similarly related to Jesus. Jesus Christ is often recognized as a beloved Brother, by men and women who will hiss the Church He founded, or pass it by with silent contempt as an impotent failure. Could it be that, because the churches have not within themselves a dynamic spirit of brotherly love, the world outside considers them unfit exponents of that wondrously divine art and grace?

All around, and even inside of the churches, are outstanding needs for the practice of real brotherly love, but the churches as a whole are not giving such a practical ministry of love to the individuals and groups about them. They are often more concerned to grow in numbers than they are to serve in humility and brotherly love. Here and there a church can be found giving "a costly ministry of love" to its neighborhood and world. But such a church is the exception, not the rule. Nor has the voice of the average church any power of appeal to its own membership on behalf of brotherly love. The lodges and civic groups have been obliged to assume the work of the church in some lines of ministry because the church would not do it. It cannot truthfully be said that the church

could not do it, for much of the money used in the work of outside or related organizations comes from church-members. But, long ago, the churches lost their vision of humble and personal service, and with the loss of vision went their larger ministry and the glory of victorious sacrifice.

Self-Giving—What one has not, cannot be given to others. What one is unwilling to pay for in order to possess, one will not pay for to give to others. That this is true of the churches is evident from the fact that in the majority of cases, there is little or no concern for a lay ministry among the members, and in consequence more than half of them do not worship, do not serve each other or anyone, and are more concerned to get than to give. It is easy to get lost among the list of members of a local church. That is selfishness and the very antithesis of brotherly love.

A Standard Needed—There is a fatal weakness in the church that has no standard of righteousness to which it militantly seeks to bring people in their practical daily living. All of them have standards, written and spoken in plain language, but at the same time contradicted in the plainest way by the practices of the church and its membership. For example, take the finances of the average communion or denomination. The financial example is chosen because it is easy to demonstrate. The income of the local church is constantly below the standards of its needs or expenditures. The work of foreign and home missions still shows vast areas of land and countless millions of people without the saving knowledge of the Gospel. Yet the churches have, within the holding of their members, money enough so that if the minimum of a tenth were given to God and half of it was spent to maintain the local institution and the other half for home and foreign missionary work, there would not be a corner of the earth within five years where everyone could not have a chance to hear the Gospel. The Bible

standard of giving for all who know God is a minimum of a tenth. The Bible teaches it, but the churches do not practise it.

Finances—The finances of the average local church reveal this failure to teach a proper standard of giving. It is the written rule in most of the churches that every member is required to give according to the measure of his prosperity for the support of the work at home and abroad. Yet, in general, *a total of less than half give anything* from one year's end to another. They all are supposed to make a verbal pledge to give when they join the institution. That pledge is oftentimes repeated with a promise to help each other to fulfill the obligation. Officials are elected or appointed to see that the pledge is fulfilled, but often the officials themselves are not living up to their own pledge. They cannot help others to do what they are notoriously failing to do themselves.

Money has become the opening wedge in the failure of the Church to produce a reasonable disciplined character in the lives of about half the average church membership, and a full discussion of its relation to the success and failure of the average church is to be found in a subsequent chapter.

A Lack of Reality—Have the churches practically abandoned their standards of life and conduct and the world outside has sensed there is not enough reality in Christian standards to give what is known it must have in order to be at peace with God? The Church cannot give outside what it does not itself possess. If the Church is to set standards of living and conduct it must first really possess them and practice them. A whitened sepulchre will never be mistaken for a home, nor will a voice crying a truth make itself heard above a life that lives the truth. The average church does not live the truth to a reasonable extent, nor does it really attempt to do so in a courageous whole-hearted way. Fear of one another may well be at the root of this matter.

Pledges—Something is wrong with the churches when a pledge to pay is regarded as a mere scrap of paper. As long as the modern Ananiases and Sapphiras in large numbers can control the policies of local churches in regard to finances, the churches will not come to a place of real leadership in the cause of righteousness. The churches have enlisted a mass of people, but have not proceeded to train them in Christian conduct. They must be trained and schooled in righteousness through the work of the other members led by the minister.

Not an Attack—A Diagnosis—Some misguided people will regard this as an attack on the churches and on Christianity when they have read this chapter. It is not intended as an attack, but as a diagnosis of outstanding weaknesses and their cure, and is a simple plea for the teaching of real Christianity, that it may have its way in human hearts and in the churches of every name. Only in this way will peace, brotherly love and real standards of righteous living rule all hearts and lead the churches to a place of unity and victory for the Prince of Peace.

Christianity Not a Failure—It is often taken for granted that Christian people are disappointed in their experience with Jesus Christ and that organized Christianity as represented by the local churches is a complete failure. From this viewpoint many strongly dissent. The average practising Christian is not at all disappointed with what he knows about Jesus Christ, but has a very great realization that the Lord God has reason to be sadly disappointed by the use he makes of Jesus Christ, and His divine institution, the local church.

The failure is in no wise to be attributed to the Lord, but must be put squarely upon the weaknesses developed by an incompetent administration of spiritual life and function as conducted by the average local church. In spite of all its present incompetence, the Church still stands as a tremendous force in the world about us. It is not the divine institution, but the people, who have failed

to produce the results which should accrue through their associating together for Christian purposes. Even the worst enemies of the Church today would not, if they could, blot out the churches of Jesus Christ from the world about them. No matter how much they may despise and reject its teachings for themselves, they have a subtle realization of its values for those whom they love and for whose physical safety, at least, they are concerned. Church life continues to mean much to organized society. It must mean much more in the future.

Ease-Loving Leaders—After all this has been said in defense of the Church and Christianity, great concern must be felt about the church-life of today. It should be a greater force in the world because it has developed many great Christian characters to live their lives in the communities around it. Wherein does the weakness find its real cause? Not in God, that is certain; nor in the Lord Jesus Christ, or His gospel, that is sure. How much of it is due to the weakness and failure of our leadership cannot be fully said, but some measure of blame must rest there. Much of the failure must be attributed to an ease-loving, soft-spoken, people-pleasing ministry who have led the rank and file astray with their part-gospel of future salvation. In Jesus Christ is to be found an eternal salvation, but whoever finds that salvation for eternity *must today and now* follow the way of a saved life.

There can be no such thing as a salvation accepted today to become effective alone in another sphere. The leaders in the ministry are not giving themselves to teaching and training a race of professing Christians who are today living separated lives for Christ's sake. There is no doubt that if the ministry caught the fire of a new passion and went at their task in a militant way, some of them would have a very hard time, but a time of cross-bearing would do great good. It is needed for the sake of the church and for the sake of an onlooking world. Certain it is that there will never be a competent church

until there is a more competent ministry. The fact that some men are able to produce a militant local church is an indication of what others might do if they were equally earnest, willing and competent.

The ministry within its own circles should weigh and examine itself and then determine whether or not it is really doing the work of the Lord in such a manner as to produce a really satisfactory and competent local church life. The average local church is not producing one-fourth of its possibilities. The world needs to have every local church produce all its Christian possibilities.

Idealism — Christianity is practical idealism. The churches must therefore help people practically to be concerned about living the Christ-life today. A church program that is chiefly concerned about a future salvation rather than for a saved life today, is on the wrong track. If the concern for salvation is all for the life beyond and not in human relations and personal righteousness today, it is not Christian, and will continue to lead the churches to failure. The churches must not continue to fail. They must plan resolutely to teach and train each individual in their membership to live aright today.

The weaknesses of the churches can be righted. They must be righted from within and under proper leadership. There is no universal panacea except the love of Jesus Christ which is sufficient to accomplish all things.

IV

THE MINISTER

Theological Education—For several generations, there has been a profound conviction that the theological seminaries are not producing men adequately trained to do the real work of the ministry. Ministers have often expressed such an opinion after several years in charge of a church. It is quite natural, therefore, to find that many lay leaders have had the same conviction about ministerial education, and that such an idea sooner or later should become quite generally entertained wherever the work of the church is under discussion.

It is fair to state that the intellectual preparation of the ministry in established educational circles is perhaps on as good a basis as is necessary and that it compares favorably with that given to technical students in other professions. But on the clinical side of preparation, the theological institutions are hopelessly outclassed by other technical institutions.

Need of Clinical Preparation—Clinical work is both expensive and difficult to operate, but it is an indisputable fact that no minister is really competent to lead a church until he has had ample clinical work. Under present conditions the first church served becomes his clinical sphere and that is likely to be disastrous to both the man and the church. Either he is in command without competent supervision, or else he is in the hands of a group of laymen whose church practices are already fixed. Either situation is undesirable and in addition the church suffers from lack of the scientific leadership that commands respect and secures co-operation in making needed changes.

Theological Seminaries—Theological seminaries, in general, are hard pressed for funds and they are numerous enough to retard each other in any appeal for more funds with which to do a better class of work. Then, the well-known conservatism of church leaders makes it exceedingly difficult to secure a proper revision of the courses of study required of a ministerial student.

Either the various seminaries should add clinical features to their courses, or they should require every student to attend some theological school offering needed courses of graduate training. The whole subject of theological education needs to be re-studied in the light of the needs of today and its relation to the Church of tomorrow. A group of interested churchmen recently endeavored to make such a study and published the results in a volume entitled "Theological Education in America," but the conclusions arrived at were so general as to be well-nigh valueless. The matter is not one that can be dallied with, for the church of tomorrow is largely made or ruined by the leadership of today.

Intellectual Preparation—It will be increasingly necessary that the average minister shall have intellectual preparation in order to attract and hold the people he must deal with. The radio, telephone, public school, and the multitude of organized groups such as Kiwanis, Rotary, and women's clubs are raising up a group of people who will not submit to the spiritual leadership of anyone of marked intellectual inferiority. On the other hand, this demand for intellectual preparation should not be interpreted to mean that the ministerial student shall of necessity be a great scholar or a scientist, or that he be conversant with such a variety of irrelevant topics that he would appear everything but a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The minister must primarily be a spiritual specialist. He must have poise. He must be able to balance various truths in the minds of his hearers and *not* lead them into fanaticism.

Careful thought and brave leadership will be needed to avoid the perils that follow the "short cut" ministerial preparation. The trend of professional preparation in general is towards a more thorough course and larger clinical experience and the ministry must not be the one profession to depart from this practice.

A Teacher—The minister of today as he builds the church of tomorrow must be a real teacher like the Master. The Church of the future will be intelligent because every member will be properly taught, and a force of trained lay teachers will be developed under the leadership of the pastor. The attempt to meet the need for trained lay workers by the payment of small fees or a small monthly stipend adds another danger to the church situation. The need of each soul is to give. Service should be given without recompense unless the worker is wholly given to professional work in the church.

The Supply of Ministers—Concern must be felt, today, about the number of ministerial candidates and the source of supply for the future. For a season the high quality was not maintained and the numbers fell off considerably, in part due to the increase of city population. Between 1915 and 1920, the enrolled student body in agricultural colleges decreased over three per cent., indicating that the trend of young people is still towards urban life and away from rural conditions. This is a factor of great importance to the church of tomorrow. In the past, the majority of our ministerial students have been recruited from village or rural church life. More ministers are needed and a decreasing supply of well-trained high-grade men will imperil the Church of tomorrow.

A Salesman—The minister of today must be a first-class salesman. To use the word "sell" in connection with spiritual processes will doubtless cause offense to some. No offense is meant when it is said again with emphasis that the minister must be trained in the art of salesmanship if the work of the Lord, represented by the church,

is to have a permanent hold upon the coming generations. The sort of salesmanship implied is that which Jesus used as He walked the road to Emmaus and made the hearts of His two listeners burn.

Leadership and Organization—The minister must be trained in the art of leadership and in the science of organization. These two things go together in the work of a local church. The average ministerial student can be taught to exercise the art of leadership which will sooner or later draw practically all the members of the church into a congenial task, according to their individual capacities. This realm of ministerial activity is the chief one where clinical training is needed.

It would seem as if the average minister thinks that he is expected to fill all the needs of the church that he serves. Consequently when his limitations are reached, a necessary and important piece of work may fail to be done because he is not capable of leading the forces in its accomplishment. If he were a really capable, trained leader, he would proceed to find or to train in his lay forces someone who had the essential qualifications for the task to be done. Such a lay leader, with the backing of the pastor, would fill the need. For instance, it is a common experience of the writer to find a church attempting to use the Every Member Plan, with the pastor holding in his own hands all the varied pieces of organization and projection needed to make the Plan a success. The whole of the average minister's time is in demand, and in consequence there is a lack of thoroughness and attention to details that dooms the Plan to failure. The church ought to recognize that few men ever combine in one life a talent for oratory, organization, and leadership with spiritual power and persistence in detail work. It is no reflection on the worth of any minister that this is so. He need not be ashamed to recognize it; the church should recognize it, and act according to the needs of the case in co-operation with the pastor.

A Dependent Minister—The church he serves does not belong to the preacher any more than an orchestra belongs to the conductor. It is the conductor's task to see that the players are capable and then to train them to produce a harmonious, high type of music. It is the minister's task to help choose the lay leaders and then train them. In this way the work of the whole church is well done by the members. It is not always understood by the outside world that the minister is quite often blocked in this task of leadership and training by the lay officials. It is often the case that the preacher is dependent rather than independent. Too often he is not a leader, he is led astray from his real place. This will be true until the church places its finances upon a different basis than generally prevails now. Many a minister is shackled by his financial dependence to a small group of unspiritual men who view him in the light of an employee. If they like him and his message, all goes well, but if he attacks their modes of living or thinking, by a preached truth that hurts them, they have the means at their disposal to silence him or to get rid of him. The financial dependence of the average minister is a serious drawback to his most effective work.

An Unorganized Church—The average church is cluttered with organization to such an extent that it is unorganized to fulfill its functions. Its many parts are too often a law unto themselves and do not co-operate with the others. Only under experienced leadership can such a situation be changed. As an example in point, a recent survey of a church revealed the fact that five separate groups were dealing with the education of young people, and that thirty-two groups had treasurers and were all chasing dollars regardless of the financial plans of the church itself or of the other thirty-one parts of the organization. It is only a very intrepid minister who would undertake to change such a situation. Lacking scientific training in church organization and finance, the old conditions continue and future generations of church people

are despoiled of their possibilities. In the future, it must be made possible for a graduate of a theological seminary to command his technical situation.

"Who is Sufficient?"—The ministry may well cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The task is so large and of such tremendous importance that it would seem to call for a superman if the power of an ever-present working spirit of God is forgotten. A man in his own strength will be sure to fail in such a ministry, but a well-prepared man, called of God to the ministry, who undertakes to walk and work with God, can surely succeed.

A Professional Consciousness—The ministry is in great need of a professional consciousness and standard. Under prevailing conditions, it is quite possible in many communions for an ignorant man to become a full-fledged minister and, in the eyes of the world, stand in equality beside the best prepared man. It may be pointed out that in the past a devoted, zealous man with a Gospel passion has often done a conspicuously successful piece of ministerial labor. It was a common sight in my boyhood days to see donkey-drawn carts, for the donkey then had high commercial value, but one seldom sees such a beast of burden in these days of the motor vehicle. Fervor or passion today are not adequate substitutes for a trained mind. In the church of tomorrow it will doubtless be demanded of a minister that he shall have both fervor and passion, and a thoroughly trained mind. It is not intended here, in any way to belittle the splendid work done in past days by some uneducated ministers and in discussing this subject of training with them, it is found that they are among the chief exponents of the new demand for a well-prepared ministry. A minority of poorly-prepared, ease-loving ministers can do great damage to the majority of men who serve their churches to good ends.

Financial Independence—The minister of the church of tomorrow will be made financially independent of the

likes and dislikes of those who contribute to the church treasury. This is vitally important to the future of the ministry and to the Church. He must receive sufficient salary to enable him to properly represent in the community the church he serves, but he must never become an object of charity obliged to accept gifts in order to maintain himself decently.

Accountability—On the other hand, a much larger measure of accountability will be demanded of the minister concerning how his employed time is used in the work of his church. In some cases where ministers draw salaries for doing church work, the use they make of their time and energy is nothing short of robbery. Without definite accountability there will be increasing laxity.

Freedom—The minister must have continued freedom within the bounds of the Gospel to present spiritual truths to his hearers. In the life of many a local church, shibboleths, often based upon misinterpretation of Scripture, combined with precedents and practices unwarranted either by common sense or the Word of God, have made the church helpless in the face of great needs in a sinful world. The primary condition that confronts the minister today is the need for a spiritual message applicable to the conditions and evils of today.

Balance Needed—Revelations of God always go hand in hand with common sense practices of Christlike living. The balance must therefore be constantly maintained by the minister of today who would build a worth-while church for tomorrow. The other extreme, however, has its evils, also, for there are too many ministers today who give heed to the call of the world and attempt to discard much that history and spiritual experience has proven essential to the work of the Church. The balance must be kept and the ministry must lead in developing the processes that will keep it. Doubtless the road lies somewhere between the two ends of the present-day contro-

versy represented by two widely separated groups of religious people.

Deeds Not Words—It must constantly be emphasized by the ministry that Christianity does not primarily consist of repeating truths, no matter how illuminating they may be, but it does consist of *living Someone*, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the Master and model of every saved life. The Church of tomorrow will be weakened, if the Church of today does not have a ministry that maintains a divine balance between expression and profession of Christianity.

Controversy—The theological wrangling of ministers has done much to weaken the hold of the churches upon mankind. The worldly-minded person of course enjoys the unchristian fight, but loses his respect for the fighter and his kind. What the busy world of men and women need today is not more opinions or words about what someone thinks the Lord Jesus Christ said, but the simple example of a minister who lives as He lived among men, and preaches Him to others. That sort of a minister compels respect and secures an opportunity to serve, for it is always true that conduct speaks louder than words, and conduct and words that support each other speak loudest of all.

For a minister to become primarily a theological controversialist is first proof that he is being led astray. Some incipient controversy is always present and may be helpful, but when it becomes personal and professional, it serves the purpose of the world rather than the purpose of the Lord Christ. Controversy prolonged only becomes harmful when wordy, ignorant fanaticism undertakes to sweep aside balanced truth. The ministry should be constantly seeking for new light regarding what is truth in God and Jesus.

Methods—Some churches under the leadership of certain ministers are led into eminently successful paths and make tremendous progress. Such ministers move from

one local church to another and produce in the new situation conditions of success achieved in former spheres of service. A church loses its successful pastor and secures a new leader. Quite often, under the changed leadership, that local church loses its place of power and fails to make progress. Such a record would seem to indicate that success could be achieved by practically all local churches if the leadership of the minister was of a proper caliber.

Adaptable Methods—In concluding this chapter on the ministry, it is necessary to point out that methods of church work are constantly changing. The successful practices of the Church of yesterday often produce no present-day result. The Word of God in presenting the formation and early history of the churches gives only a very few definite methods. The reason is now apparent in the changing world about us. What would be successful in that day, would not suit the conditions of this day. But the Word of God does give the minister, in his capacity as church-leader, ample ground for the adoption of many good methods aimed to produce a church membership which will worship, serve, witness, and give. It must be the constant aim of every minister to find good methods, to become proficient in their use and then secure their adoption in his own church. Good methods of enlistment, education and finance are essential when spiritual powers are utilized as balance. The minister therefore must not become a mere mechanician, but seek to attain the high distinction of a potent spiritual guide.

V.

ITS FINANCES

Money and Salvation—Due to fundamental misconceptions concerning the relation of a Christian to his material possessions, the whole problem of church monies is still far from being solved in a satisfactory way. A man's money bears on it the stamp of his personality. When a man has money in his possession for his own uses, it is just as much a part of his life as his soul. No man in the sight of God can be partly lost and partly saved. Either he is a lost soul or a saved one. If he is saved, all that belongs to him and his life as an individual must have entered into the surrender and acknowledgment that made it possible for him to be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ. A great apostle put it this way, that if we will confess Jesus *as Lord*, we shall be saved. Under such a statement, it is quite apparent that the man cannot confess Jesus as Lord with his lips and deny the Lordship of Jesus Christ with his money. Such an attempt would be foolish in the eyes of every bystander.

The Real Need—When, therefore, the cause of the Lord needs money, in reality, the need is not primarily money, but men. So great a money lack reveals the danger that besets God's people because their lips cry "Lord, Lord," but their dollar self shouts "Keep, keep, for self."

The difficulty is to get the people who withhold their money to see that spiritually they are not right with God. Such a sin as withholding from the Lord may trouble anyone for a little while, when starting a Christian life, but if the Lord Christ is really known and loved, the life will not persistently refuse to pay the monetary obligations

to God. The mark of a Christian is in the fact that when sin is realized, it is followed by repentance and a forsaking of sin. Again and again, it is necessary to remind ourselves that "not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Fear of Man—The quest, therefore, is not for money, but for men. Men and women must be told lovingly but fearlessly the truth about a proper relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. The local church needs to cease being afraid of the covetous, and see in them the great need that lost souls have for a saving Lord. Most of all should the institution be afraid to let them die neglected. Many church leaders are weary of hearing the fearful and cowardly decry the demand for money, "because it drives people away from the church life." Improper appeals for money must not be made, nor should the Church seek to produce money in unspiritual ways; but a right approach for money will never drive a loving, intelligent disciple away from his Lord. When the local group makes everyone of its members intelligent and loving, then God's cause will not suffer from a lack of money.

Stewardship—Immense progress, however, has been made in recent years to clear the financial atmosphere of the churches by presenting the obligations of stewardship to every member, and by fostering in the life of local churches a definite expectation that every member not receiving support from the Church shall be a contributor of record to current expenses and to mission and beneficences.

A Church Budget—To this effort has been added some very successful work tending to produce unity in the administration of church finances. It is now becoming a common practice for a church to make up, at the beginning of the fiscal year, a unified current expense budget which includes the maximum needs of every department of the church and to put alongside of this a similar all-

inclusive budget for missions and beneficence. A sample of such a budget is displayed here.

Pastor's Salary \$.....	
Auto Upkeep \$.....	
Pension Premium \$.....	
Employed Force \$.....	
Bible School \$.....	
Women's Organization \$....	
Young People's Soc. \$.....	
Men's Work \$.....	
Music \$.....	
Light and Heat \$.....	
Evang. Meetings \$.....	
Repairs and Improv. \$.....	
Insurance \$.....	
Interest on Debt \$.....	
Debt \$.....	
Postage, Stationery \$.....	
Printing \$.....	
Social Life \$.....	
Telephone \$.....	
Relig. Ed. Material \$.....	
Church Reserve Fund \$.....	
Pastors' Fund \$.....	
	Missionary Societies and Boards—
	\$.....
	\$.....
	\$.....
	\$.....
	Women's Societies and Boards—
	\$.....
	Schools and Colleges—
	\$..... \$.....
	Other Beneficence \$.....
	Reserve Fund for Mis- sionary Purposes \$.....

Pauperized Members—The average man in the street looks upon the local church as an object of charity, and so he either patronizes it or despises it. About half the members of the institution are so unintelligent concerning its purposes that they have no sense of responsibility concerning its maintenance. It would seem as if they had an idea that it was to be supported directly from God through miraculous means, or that it was the task of a few people who were rich or foolish. At all events, they have no place in its support and are paupers within its doors.

A thorough Every Member Plan should therefore be conducted by the church, and after careful timely education in a spiritual atmosphere every member is approached with a view to securing a subscription for both current expenses and missions, to be paid week by week. This agreement to pay is based upon God-given prosperity, and is therefore subject to cancellation and increase or de-

crease in accordance with the changed financial condition of each individual.

The Follow-Up—A wise, businesslike, yet brotherly system of follow-up of every pledgor should be maintained by the church officials, and the result will be that a total change of atmosphere pervades the financial affairs of the church. This should become the practice of every church.

Increased giving often results from the Every Member Plan to such an extent that the whole life of the church is enlarged and participation in world enterprises, as well as enlarged programs at home, are made possible. A good beginning has been made with the forward-looking, progressive-spirited churches, but a great number of others, under the leadership of ignorant and non-stewarding laymen, or "fear-full" preachers, decline to change from old and unwise financial procedure to anything that is new. The time-worn statement of some church leaders, "We never did it that way before," puts a barrier in the path to progress and spiritual financing and it often takes the death of some such local leaders to clear the path so that progress can result.

The Minimum Budget—The difference between a minimum and maximum budget is becoming clear to many church financiers. Usually the old plan called for an attempt to raise from the willing givers such a sum of money as would allow the church to carry on its work during the ensuing twelve months. There was a consistent expectation that a deficit would occur at times during the year and a sure deficit would have to be faced at the end of the fiscal year. This was the signal for the same group of willing givers to meet the deficit, or failing this, it would be carried into the next year. This process describes what is meant by a minimum budget or minimum financing without any definite budget.

Such a procedure is a constant barrier to spiritual life and progress and too often it brings other ills such as a

disgruntled group of over-pressed members on one side and a pauperized group on the other side. A financial practice of that kind has brought many a church to the place where its credit in the community is gone and its financial embarrassments are a constant drawback to any definite progress and enlarged program.

Sadly, it must be said that the average local church has no cash balance, no reserve fund, and no credit in the financial circles of its community. Yet very often in its membership and on its official boards are the leading business men and financiers of commercial life in the community. Rapid changes from such a condition are taking place and will continue to take place in local church life until the churches will eventually be among the most carefully financed organizations in the world.

Details Cared For—The finances of the average local church have been handled by the men. Men are accustomed to view things in the large and do not like to handle details. In commercial circles, the details are committed to others, often to women assistants. Women are developed along lines that make them very successful in handling details. For years they have been excluded from church financing except through minor or subsidiary departments, and were unable to influence church financing to any great extent. In the face of this, they were often saddled with the debts incurred by the men. Lately, however, numerous churches have included women in their finance committees, and details are being cared for. The men do their part of the work better, and the women give close attention to such detail processes as produce a good financial condition. No sensible person would desire to feminize a church, least of all the women themselves, but the womanhood of Christianity is entitled to fair representation on the finance board of the church instead of being forced in one or other of the various women's organizations to assume and raise the deficits incurred by a male finance committee.

Women and Money—Careful investigation and analysis by a competent national organization reveals the fact that about eighty per cent. of all *monies* spent in America today are expended by women. Even if this is an overstatement of fact, it discloses a disquieting situation when it is remembered that the adult women in our local churches do not produce even a fourth of the money which passes through the treasuries of the church. Adult women constitute at least forty per cent. of the sixty-seven per cent. of females in the average church membership. One of two things, therefore, is evident. Either many women in church life are not sufficiently interested in Christianity to secure funds for such purposes, even when they are quite capable of securing funds for other purposes, or else many of them are evading their church obligations on the plea that their husbands will not provide them with money *for church purposes*. Womanhood has always been a dynamic factor in religious life, and the church of today must not neglect to develop its womanhood in a proper stewardship of money for the sake of the future church.

For many years churchwomen were often engaged in money-raising and many local organizations used the women as the channel through which all sorts of money-making processes were developed. Perhaps the women became used to getting money from other people and considered that when they gave their time, energy, talents, food-stuffs and sewing materials, it was not necessary to give actual money. The teaching of stewardship, however, forced many loving Christian women to see their mistake in that direction, and consequently there was a large decrease in the money-earning activities in many churches. But there are many signs today that the unspiritual production of money for the Lord's work is again increasing. It must not be allowed to increase, and all secondary methods for the production of Gospel money must be put out of business as rapidly as possible. While

the world waits for Christ, and the local community is lacking in Christ-like ministries, the church membership ignorant and non-missionary, it is little short of a crime to use the abilities of churchwomen for the purpose of making profits out of commercial transactions in the name of the church.

A Basic Principle—With this in mind, let us consider a basic principle and examine its soundness as it applies to the women's organization or any other organized part of the local institution.

NO SUBSIDIARY ORGANIZATION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH SHOULD HAVE ANY PRIMARY MONEY-RAISING FUNCTIONS. This is a sound principle for the following reasons:

1. If the church, as a household of faith, treats properly all the members of the organization along fundamental lines, that parent body will see to it that *Every Member Pays* to God the first fruitage of all their increase for ALL Kingdom purposes. In addition, many should be helped to make gifts or over-all offerings as further tokens of love. All must give proportionately as well as regularly. Dues for missionary organizations and the penny habit in the Bible School of the church have done much to fix small and inadequate giving habits upon present church members. It is just as easy to die from impaired circulation as from no circulation, except that the agony is usually greater in the former case. Every church-member must, therefore, be led to give regularly and proportionately to all departments of the church and missionary enterprise.

This being done, every man, woman and child is giving to God for all the objects included in the task of the local church, and in consequence there remains no money-raising work to be done by a part of the whole.

2. Women's work around the world for women and children is part of the Kingdom task, and in consequence it belongs to the whole Church of Jesus Christ, and therefore men and children who desire to be obedient should

participate in it as well as women. Women's church and mission work should be included in the beneficence budget of the church. This is true even if in the larger circles of denominational missionary life, the administration of funds and the furnishing of workers abroad is assigned to women. This applies with equal force to the Church School, the Young People's Organization, and the Men's Organization.

3. Giving in the spiritual life is like heart action in the physical life. It is a vital function of the individual Christian life. The duty is individual because vital to the life itself. Scripture on this subject is largely addressed to the individual.

As such, no organization can group a functional activity, the individual life must have its own function of giving or it will die. The function must also be related to the whole life or it will fail of its real objective.

4. Largely because of the confusion and injury arising from the wrong methods of raising money, the educational work along fundamental lines has been lacking. Much of the so-called educational work along missionary lines has been mere camouflage for producing money, and in consequence the average local church is still missionary in name only. Either that or its one idea of missionary activity is to produce money.

One of the great objectives of the women's organization in the future will be educational and therefore fundamental. As previously stated, the task is still at hand to make the church a missionary and ministering organization. To accomplish this result, all available time, energy, and talent contained in the body of women must be devoted to this great task. Their efforts must be unhampered by money goals. To assert, as is often done: "If the money-raising work is taken away from the women's organization, there is nothing much left for them to do," is to utter the greatest condemnation upon the past activities of such bodies. The world and the *average com-*

munity is still waiting for the knowledge of a Saviour, and so is the membership of the average church.

5. Modern experience has demonstrated the wisdom of securing a large and continuous return on one approach to be paid in week by week, rather than some return in a number of small unrelated responses. An occasional thank offering completes a wise and spiritual function of giving.

Excuses—Church workers of wide experience unite in saying that the various approaches of many small units in the church have been causing a large part of the excuses given by non-contributing members of the church. Many a church member, when met by the church committee, has said: "Oh, I give already." "Not to the church expense or beneficence fund?" "No, but to the women's organization," or "to the Bible School." So the giving of the dollar or some such small sum has furnished an excuse to many members why a real stewardship should not be carried out in the life. The constant nagging approaches for cash have driven away many a woman from the missionary organizations and also from the whole life of the church. Scientific business efficiency aims to eliminate false motions even in the laying of brick. Why, then, use from eight to ten motions in paying God's money into His service when it can be done in one orderly motion by using a Church United Budget, a double-pocket, week-by-week envelope, and an Annual Every Member Plan?

Regular Week by Week Payments—Take away the money-raising activities of all subsidiary parts of the church and then, *with the help of the women*, see to it that the church secures from *every member* a reasonable response and we will solve the chief difficulty of eighty per cent. of the churches throughout the world. In recent years it has been demonstrated, over and over again, that it is easier to secure one adequate response in an orderly approach than it has been to secure smaller

sums through a number of approaches. Secular organizations and some religious bodies are able to secure regular sums of money from their members. All the churches can do this if they will just *do it*.

6. Group-giving has led to unspiritual and even illegal methods for producing money. Many of these methods resulted in the money being dug up out of other people's lives rather than being given by the children of God as an act of love for and worship of Him. Money-raising by segments of the church leads quite often to group selfishness, narrowness and isolation. Paying money into an organization from motives of sex loyalty is not necessarily worshipful giving. The worship and not the money is of prime importance. The worship of God is the cause, and the money produced is its effect.

Group methods have resulted in many Christian people thinking that time and energy can be given to God as substitutes for money. The first-fruits of all your increase is God's loving demand of all His children.

7. Divisive and competitive feeling has often been aroused by the money-raising proclivities of subsidiary parts of the church unit. Many times it has been said, "Let the other people take care of themselves, we have raised our apportionment," or "The Women's Society has raised more for women's missions than the church has raised for its general Society," or as the last-named organization is often dubbed, "The Men's Society." Some careful thought will reveal the vital dangers in the thoughts that lead to such remarks.

8. The female sex constitutes sixty-five or more per cent. of the usual church membership. That large share of the church should have adequate representation on the various administrative boards. The women have not been fairly treated in this respect. Nor is the church unit blameless concerning the causes that have led many women's groups to feel that every man's hand was against them. Sometimes even a pastor has failed to properly

espouse the just cause of the women as against other parts of the local church.

9. Enough churches have tried out the plan of a Church United Budget to prove that it works well when it is well worked. It is simple and will produce the needed resources if a thorough Every Member Plan is made every year on a proper spiritual basis.

10. The principle is sound, even if it flies in the face of the discipline or governing precedents of the communion. Other such articles or rules have been changed. For instance, in recent days some communions, in spite of precedents, have given women their just rights and put them on a basis of equality with other members. Even the conservative church is slowly coming to a basis of real democracy and sweeping away unjust sex distinctions. Women in the church should be given a chance to help administer all the funds of the whole body.

11. The principle is sound in that it puts upon the whole household the fundamental task of producing stewards. Then it leaves as a distinct piece of further fundamental work the task of education as well as the other duty of furnishing inspiration without a money objective. *Idealism Again*—"But," someone says at this point, "stop right there. You are supposed to have your feet on the ground, and this plan is idealism." Do not shy at idealism, however. Many a church is today working this so-called ideal plan with a large measure of success. It produces peace of mind, more money and a unified church. Try it before you condemn it, or before you let your precedents or prejudices make you fight the plan or reject the principle set forth here.

Regularity of Payments—The plan of giving week by week has been successfully inaugurated in a large number of churches. The wage-earner, paid each week or twice a month, finds this plan enables him to pay regularly and in proportion to the size of the wage earned from time to time. The salaried man is enabled to put aside a part of

each month's salary as God's money for gospel purposes, and to distribute it during the ensuing four or five weeks. Even the farmer, the professional man, or a salesman working on a commission basis finds the plan of giving week by week conducive to good stewardship and to the orderly habit of budgeting his earnings upon a balanced basis.

The week-by-week basis of giving has enabled many a church to pay its bills with promptness and secure a new respect as a Christian organization. It has also solved the problem of many a minister who in bygone days was paid his salary at irregular intervals and therefore paid his obligations so irregularly as to endanger his financial standing in commercial circles where the situation was not understood.

Monthly Distribution—Further progress must be made along the line of week-by-week payments, to clear altogether the path to proper church financing. Week-by-week payments must be followed up by prompt monthly distribution of all money contributed for missions and beneficences. With all the progress that has been made towards better financial processes in church circles, it remains true that many a missionary or benevolent organization still pays out enormous interest charges on funds borrowed to maintain current payments merely because church treasurers will not make prompt monthly disbursements of funds contributed for the work of designated organizations.

One communion recently reported that sixty-three per cent. of all monies contributed by many thousands of churches, came into the denominational treasuries within the closing three months of the year. Money had to be borrowed from the banks during the opening nine-months period, and the resulting interest charges constituted an unbusinesslike and un-Christian waste on the part of the churches, and the officials charged by them with the handling of their funds.

A recent visit to one prominent church secured from the missionary treasurer the acknowledgment that he had on hand, and lying idle, over four thousand dollars which had been in process of accumulation during the previous nine and a half months. At the same time, the denomination enterprises to which that money belonged had been paying six per cent. interest upon money borrowed to pay current bills. Much progress has been made in recent years in church finance, but much more needs to be made before the churches realize the advantages that accrue to well-financed institutions.

A Maximum Budget Necessary—A maximum church budget is built with progress in mind, and with the definite expectation that in the current expense fund there will always be a balance in the bank to cover every possible need, usual or unusual. A church was recently visited which, after twenty-six years of financing on a minimum basis, was experiencing, for the first time, the benefits of maximum financing. At the end of the first quarter of the year the current expense treasurer reported all bills paid and a substantial balance in the treasury. One of the older members arose in the meeting and demanded to know why the treasurer had made such a foolish error, and asked that it be corrected at once. When he was informed that there was no error, but was a correct statement, he passed his hands through his hair and remarked: "Well, I can scarcely believe it even now, for I never expected this church to be able to meet its bills as it went along; much less to have a balance on hand." Then he sat down with a mystified air.

Proportionate Giving—Such a condition ought to exist in every church, and before long it will be so, for it is rapidly coming true that the membership are being taught stewardship, and enlisted to give week by week on the proportionate basis of the tithe, at least, of all money earned. Standards of giving on a per capita basis are going up steadily. A bureau of statistics states that the

average income of every man, woman and child is about \$640 per annum. The standard of giving for Christian people should therefore be upon a minimum of \$64 per capita, per annum, for all gospel purposes. But it is far below that now. In some local churches it goes as low as \$9.70 per capita, per annum, for current expenses and \$1.70 for missions and beneficence. In other local churches, it goes as high as \$34.70 per capita, per annum, for current expenses and \$61.10 per capita, per annum, for missions and beneficences. A building enterprise will often make these figures even higher, as people will contribute from their capital funds when their church is erecting a new edifice.

A fair statement of the standard of present-day giving is about on a basis of \$20.68 per annum, per capita, divided between current expenses and missions as follows: Current Expense, \$15.86; Missions, \$4.82. When it is remembered that present-day giving is all done by about half the members of the average church it will be realized that those who do give are generally giving upon a moderate basis. The real task before the average church is to enlist those who now give nothing of record, and to increase the standard of giving practiced by many present contributors.

Further Progress Needed—When the situation, therefore, is viewed from the standpoint of the average giving of the denominations, or of the individual, much progress must yet be made before a Scriptural standard of sacrificial giving is reached. The problem is not one of good methods primarily, but one of spiritual life and a proper relation to God. To push methods alone will be to court certain failure. To teach stewardship and the proper relationship of every child of God to his Father-Owner, will be to lay a good foundation for right methods which will add to the joy and dignity of every money process in the church.

The outlook for the Church of tomorrow is very bright

indeed if the Church of today will continue to build into the lives of the younger generation the cardinal principles of stewardship and spiritual giving. A church well financed upon a spiritual foundation will have no need to justify its existence. It is already justified in the developed sacrificial self-giving of its members.

VI

THE OBJECTIVES OF ITS PROGRAM

Criticism—Church people, in general, have always had a particular aversion to any form of criticism, and have usually resented it in an unmistakable way. It must be remembered, however, that there are two kinds of criticism, destructive and constructive.

Constructive criticism should always be welcomed and the necessary attention given to it, in order to produce the best possible results for the institution concerned. Destructive criticism should likewise be given careful attention. The enemies of an institution such as the local church can unwittingly help the cause of the church by drawing attention to failures and weaknesses which can then be easily avoided and thus, in the end, strengthen instead of destroy its influence.

This study of the program of the local church will be frankly critical, but its whole aim and purpose will be to make it a stronger and more potent instrument for righteousness in the days that lie ahead.

Development of the Members—The first and most serious concern of any local church is to care for and develop its membership. To concentrate on the adding of new names on the roll while allowing those previously enrolled to drift away in a steady stream is nothing short of criminal carelessness.

Preach the Gospel—Of first importance in the care and development of church-members is the preaching of the Gospel. That task belongs primarily to the minister. He is the undershepherd and must see that the sheep of his flock are fed systematically and properly. Nothing can

substitute for the preaching of the Word of God. To feed people science, art, politics, economics, or some popular stuff which attracts a crowd temporarily, is to miss the greatest opportunity of ministerial responsibility. Mankind needs spiritual help, and in the church services of worship they should find the help needed. The fact that church members absent themselves from the worship life of the church is proof that they need spiritual help. The church is not at its task supplying it to them in such a way that they will attend and secure the help they need.

Filling the Pews—It is not the task of the minister to fill the pews, but he must not help to keep them empty by lack of work or spiritual dynamic. The task of bringing the membership to the house of God belongs to the members of the church, and in particular to the lay spiritual officers. This is almost a revolutionary viewpoint to many a church member and officer, but it is the common sense point of view. No one man serving as a pastor is able to keep track of several hundred people, and at the same time meet the other numerous and really essential demands upon his time and energy. It would seem plain, by the New Testament, that lay spiritual officials called deacons and deaconesses should be chosen in the proper manner and in sufficient numbers to guarantee that every member of the church will be lovingly and thoroughly cared for through personal ministries.

A Group Plan—A simple plan for forming the membership into groups and designating a deacon and deaconess, or some other responsible lay worker, to the oversight of each group has worked wonders even where a lack of thoroughness has been manifested by some of those officials. Lack of thoroughness and persistence are two of the besetting sins of many a local church. But there are frequent signs to indicate that these sins are being banished in many churches.

Ignorant Members—The program of each church should include the education of every member and of the

whole constituency of all departments in its organization. The average church-member is not well-versed in the tenets of his faith. He is often utterly ignorant of the simple principles that underlie the objectives of his denomination. When it comes to more complex things such as doctrine, missions, stewardship and social service, the mass of church-members are quite untaught. The ignorance of church-members constitutes the one great ground for the failure of a large percentage of them to achieve any measure of spiritual growth. At the same time, it reveals the reason why the membership losses experienced by many churches average each year about *half as many as the additions upon profession of faith*. When fully realized, this is an appalling fact. Pulpit utterance of fundamental tenets is not sufficient; they must be supplemented by class teaching.

Christianity and education are closely related. It might be said that education is the child of Christianity. The Church of tomorrow, if it is to have real strength, will have it largely as a result of adopting and carrying out, today, scientific plans and processes of education.

Trained Teachers—The past has seen the Church depending upon mass efforts often highly charged with a rank form of emotionalism. Some emotion is a good thing, but before and after an emotional stirring of a mass of people must be put personal teaching by trained teachers. Practically every church has a corps of trained teachers in its membership, and they ought to be linked in a service to their church that eventually produces an intelligent constituency.

There is no reason today for continued ignorance, and if it is allowed to continue, it will seriously affect the churches of tomorrow in all their work at home and abroad.

A Purpose—Every church should have a very definite purpose before its entire membership, so that all the talents, powers, and personalities of the institution, as well

as of the organization, can be focused upon the accomplishment of that purpose.

Churches, like individuals, differ. No two of them are exactly alike in their possibilities and powers. It is consequently a practical impossibility to state in concrete form a general purpose or program that would suit the majority.

Realizing the Possibilities—What percentage of its possibilities does the average local church utilize? Those possibilities lie in two directions—the spiritual elements such as prayer, fellowship, love, worship and stewardship, and then the personal or material elements such as talents, money, time, personality, and group or united action. Many groups of lay leaders and ministers have placed the percentage of possibilities realized as low as five and as high as twenty-five per cent. Doubtless it is somewhere between these two figures, with here and there a church that may even exceed the twenty-five per cent. of realized possibilities. It is a most promising sign that many lay leaders and ministers today are willing to frankly face the situation and weigh their failures and successes in order to eliminate some of the failures and achieve a greater measure of success. It is a difficult matter to examine a local church and justly weigh its possibilities because they differ very widely in different sections of the country and in the different types of churches. Until self-examination has made more progress and the churches know how to properly appraise their operations and possibilities, there will be a continued measure of failure, and greater than is necessary. “Know thyself!” is just as useful a slogan for a church as for an individual.

Get the Facts—Every church should study its environment, competitive factors, buildings, financial possibilities, the personalities of its constituents, and its past history and ministry. In the light of these factors, it is enabled to come to some very definite purposes concerning its future activities. Unless this is thoroughly done, the

church will have neither plan nor program to make it a worthwhile organization.

Accountability—There is tremendous possibility in a definite plan and program. First of all, it requires a sense of accountability. Then it calls for a careful assignment of available personalities according to their fitness for various duties. It leads to the discovery of needs and of available but heretofore unused personalities and powers. It creates a need for improved educational processes so that the Church may not be faced with problems which cannot be met because of the dearth of adequate leadership. Such educational processes will serve to train for leadership those who now are weak and incompetent merely through lack of proper and personal oversight.

A Definite Plan—A definite plan and program reveals the strength and the weakness of the parts of the whole, and strengthens the weak by the wise use of the potent parts of the whole. The successful church of the future will give particular attention to the formulation of a series of definite objectives to be achieved through a plan and a program for the use of the *whole* group. A well planned, properly carried out program of spiritual ministries helps to justify the continuance of any church.

Missions—The program of every local church must be permeated with the missionary spirit and enterprise. Of course, it is a costly proposition, but worth all its costs. Practically every church has a membership with means enough, if they will give as God desires, to enable them to fill a worthy place in the world endeavor. To try constantly to gather sums of money from those who have not the proper background of knowledge and inspiration is wasted effort. Money will flow from the lives of a spiritually-minded, world-visioned and well-informed group of people. The church of today needs, therefore, to pause long enough in its desire to get money for missions or current expenses in order to give the uninterested

church-member a real chance to be indoctrinated and environed. In the meantime, the earnest, loyal givers of today will maintain the present missionary standards and within a short period will find their ranks receiving large and worthwhile additions from those who have been properly taught before they are importuned to give for what they know nothing about.

If the women's missionary society in the average church would let all the money-raising be cared for by the church itself, and would turn the major part of their time and talents into educational, prayerful, personal ministry, and inspirational missionary efforts, the church of tomorrow would surely be missionary.

An Example—Some time ago, a woman's organization gave up the task of raising money and turned their whole attention to ministries and missionary education. In the first six months of their work they regained the love and interest of a woman who had been a church-member for many years, but had not been in the church for several years because, she said: "You never come near me unless you want money." Before the year ended, that one regained member had personally and lovingly given to missions more than the whole woman's organization had previously raised in a whole year. The probability is that she will continue to give in the future in the same measure. To chase dollars, no matter how much they seem to be needed, as has been shown elsewhere, does not belong in the task of any subsidiary part of the church. The church itself, as a whole, must secure from every member a proportionate, systematic, all-inclusive participation in spiritual giving. That having been done, every part of the local organization will devote its time, energy, and talents to the spiritual life, the envisioning, householding and education of all within reach. "Foolish idealism," some will say.

Personal Giving—Others will refuse to entertain the idea because they like and have grown accustomed to the

commercial attempts to produce money. There is only one correct and direct method, which is for all church-members to give *of record* for all purposes, week by week, on the basis of their God-given prosperity. This whole program as outlined here has been in successful operation in enough churches, scattered all over the land, to guarantee its success. Before it is put into universal operation, the hide-bound, precedent-hugging, money-grabbing, non-stewarding church-members must be won over or eliminated from the body. A movement in the right direction has been started and will come to the fullness of power in the Church of tomorrow.

A Lack of Life—When a local church has a real spiritual life, it will have enough means to carry out its full share of Christ's world program. Today, much that might be done cannot be attempted because there is no money in sight to finance the undertaking. Yet about half the members never give one cent towards maintaining the local work and its world outreach.

Impoverished Churches—Today, many a church flutters around its task, hindered by conflicting agencies, impotent to launch out into the depths of service, because it is impoverished financially and undeveloped spiritually. It may be asserted by some that far too much mention has been made in this study about finance and money. Much has been said about these things. Much needs to be said in the church of today until practically everyone comes to the knowledge that to be a child of God means the recognition of a personal stewardship of all that belongs to life. Money, therefore, is involved. Love and a steward's privilege must therefore operate in each and every life, causing it to produce the money fruitage of real stewardship. The prime factor, therefore, is not money, but life, spiritual life, a right relation to God. To the end, therefore, that the churches of tomorrow may not be hindered as are the churches of today, every church-member must be taught how to love God, and among other ways of

witnessing for Him, to properly distribute the money in his possession.

Proper Cultivation—While riding through a section of country where large tracts of land had recently been brought into new use by means of modern cultivation we noticed that enough of the old worn-out remnants were on hand to make a vivid contrast between the old and the new conditions. Here was an ancient orchard with the trees all bent and gnarled. They were scale-infested and insect-eaten. Where there was any fruit upon the trees, it was small, maggoty and unsalable. One glance made it quite apparent that the weed-strewn acres with the almost useless trees upon them were not producing enough revenue to pay even the taxes, much less produce any return in the way of interest and profits. Those orchards were a desolate-looking sight.

Scattered in between the patches of worn-out orchard were others that were a joy to behold, for their appearance told a story of proper selection, wise, continued cultivation, and great productivity. Men and women were moving about, under, and in the trees. Great boxes of fruit were piled up ready to be sent to market. The trees were symmetrical, clean of insects, and growing, while the land beneath them showed that it had been carefully cultivated and enriched. What a contrast there was between the two kinds of orchards!

In both cases, however, the climate was the same and also the land, yet on one side was failure, and on the other success. The old trees and the young ones were the same variety, but in the case of the old orchards, all sorts of scale and insects had been allowed to ruin the trees, while a spray and other modern care had protected the new trees. As we rode on, we wondered what would have happened if the old orchards had been properly cared for. Just then we turned a bend in the road and there was an old orchard that bore every evidence of care and consequent profit. Underneath and in the trees were men and

women busy gathering a great harvest of fruit. The old orchard was as pretty a sight as any of the younger ones, for tree graft, spray, trimmer, plough and soil enricher had all been used to full advantage. The difference between the good and the poor orchards was a matter of care and cultivation.

Churches Contrasted—With the orchards left behind, the thought of many a local church came to mind. Some of them were united, progressive, evangelistic, missionary, educated and productive, while others alongside of them are disturbed by factions, unprogressive, without evangelistic passion, non-missionary, ignorant and unproductive. Inevitably it will be found that the successful church has been properly cultivated under wise and heroic pastoral and lay service, while the other type of church has had a narrow, unwise, easy-going pastoral and lay leadership which has been content to let things drift into failure. There are many successful churches, enough to prove that all have a right to succeed if the work is well done. Success should be the rightful heritage of every church. They all have the same God, the identical Saviour, the ministry of the same Spirit, and the same wonderful Gospel, but some use these blessings aright, while others fail to do so. We mark, therefore, the great contrast between the two kinds of churches as we did between the two sorts of orchards. Let us cultivate and properly care for our local churches through wisely devised plans and programs, and then their continuance will be assured. Only by such means can their continuance be justified.

VII

BUILDING THE FUTURE PROGRAM

Changes Needed—The foundations that are laid, today, will largely determine what stability, dynamic and success will mark the churches of tomorrow. It has been indicated that some decided changes need to be made in the processes and programs of the average church of today, in order to meet the constructive criticisms of some within and many without the membership. In the future the local church will be more and more under scrutiny, and it must justify its maintenance by its life of good works.

The Rural Church—Much more attention must be paid to the small church, in what is often spoken of as the rural or village situation. A measure of responsibility for a changed small church rests upon the larger and more prosperous churches. A considerable portion of the city church membership comes from country and village districts. The trend is still towards the city and for the properly equipped, well led and adequately housed city or town church to ignore present conditions in the average village or rural church is to seriously damage its own future. Many young people are raised in a rural church where there is no equipment for doing worthwhile work, where there is no social program and no educational processes, but simply occasional preaching services conducted too often by an earnest, but unprepared, inadequate minister. Many of these young people migrate to the cities and towns. This creates a situation whereby a large group with such a background, get into the city or town church by dismissal from the village or rural church. To allow

this situation to continue is to create a serious difficulty in the larger centers in maintaining proper standards and achieving goals that are worth while. The inadequate, poorly-prepared, underpaid small church minister must have some worthwhile help from the more fortunate preacher, and the large church with its needs properly supplied must help those in a less prosperous condition.

In a mid-western town of almost fifty thousand people, there is a church of seven hundred members, and almost two hundred of them came from small churches in the surrounding villages and rural sections. The formative period in the lives of most of those two hundred people had passed. They had been raised on a very simple, inadequate and oftentimes emotional type of religion, and in consequence they had no conception of a real worship life or of what it means to really serve the Kingdom and the church. They had no witnessing power, no service outlook, and had not been trained in giving as stewards of God's manifold blessings. It must not be understood that the city churches or larger churches are being held up as models. There is many a church in a village or rural section that does a far better type of work than is being done by bigger and more prosperous ones. The small churches with a membership of 125 or less comprise almost seventy per cent. of the total. They do not ask nor accept charity, but they do need and will gladly accept co-operation in service and training. A great amount of attention is now being given to the small village and rural church, and it augurs well for the future of the whole cause of the local church.

Not Size That Counts—Recently, in the terminal yards of a great railroad system, one of the modern mogul engines of tremendous size was standing motionless on the tracks. Just then, along came a dinky little engine, scarcely one-fourth the size of the mogul. The little engine backed down, the switchman coupled it to the mogul, and with a puff and a bit of a snort, the little fel-

low pulled the big fellow away. It was a very interesting scene and compelled an analysis of the situation.

It was not size that counted, for the big engine was helpless, while the little engine had the power not only to move itself, but also to pull the big one along. It is not size that counts in a church membership, even though some of its members may boast loudly that "my church has a thousand members." There is a little church near a very much larger one, but it was the little church that furnished example and then power to the big church when it was standing still for lack of life. With churches, as with engines, it is not size but power that counts, and such power, in the case of the church, is the power of believers who walk with the Lord.

Work Counts—It might be noted, also, that the cab of the big engine was empty while the cab of the little fellow was occupied by two men hard at work. One man was putting fuel on the fire under the boiler in order to produce power, while the engineer was making wise use of the power that was being produced. The labor of these men counted, and not the size of the engine.

There is a church of several hundred members led by a man of God with a working force of people that produced power enough to start the wheels of eternity moving in many a life and surrounding church, while a great, big, pretentious church building nearby, open on Sunday and once or twice during the week for about an hour and a half at a time, was not able to produce any power. The cab of that big church was empty while that of the little unpretentious church nearby was properly manned. That counts, and not the size of the church.

Fuel Counts—There was fuel on both the big engine and the little one; but while the former was not using its fuel, the latter was using what it had to good advantage, and it is just this wise use of fuel, rather than the size of the engine, which counted. A big church has the Word of God and the ministry of the Spirit at its disposal, but per-

haps does not use them, while a much smaller church nearby uses the Spirit of truth for every good purpose of instruction and fraternal ministry. That counts, and not the size of the church.

The contribution to the Kingdom made by the small churches has been tremendous and cannot be overlooked. Inadequate and poverty-stricken as many of them are, yet many of them have produced a wealth of ministerial timber and of missionary workers far beyond that produced by many of the larger and better equipped churches. They contain, today, sources of men and money beyond the expectation of many. In fact, the small churches constitute the bulk of our future prospects and powers. They do need, however, equipment in the way of buildings suitable for educational and social work. They need help in the scientific survey of the community they serve, for only upon the basis of facts can a proper plan and program be devised for the many types of local church work demanded. But in a well-studied plan and a properly-devised program lies a large share of the hope for future success.

The New Member—The future holds promise of better things because much more care is now being given to the handling of the incoming member. A well trained, participating membership justifies the continuance of any church. Scripture gives no details of the method of securing an adequate confession from a newborn soul, nor does the Word of God give any directions as to how an incoming member shall be handled. A luminous statement is all that is given concerning the confession and profession of the converted on the day of Pentecost and in the days that followed. "And there was added unto them daily, such as were being saved, and they continued daily," etc. We are not given a hint of what was done, but we are told what the results were. Doubtless some members fell away later, but it is fairly certain that the loss was nowhere near what the average church suffers today. Those were days of cross-bearing and the costs of Chris-

tianity to its followers were great. It is an arresting fact that for many years, out of every hundred converts added to the average church membership by profession of faith, fifty were sooner or later excluded or erased for cause. An appalling loss and a terrible indictment of the churches for failing to use proper methods with the newcomers in order to conserve them. Lately, the cross-bearing side of Christianity has been minimized and church membership has too often been the cheapest and easiest experience in the life of a professor. The future holds great promise of better things, because the churches are demanding that newcomers be properly instructed as to their duties and privileges by lay leaders and the minister, and that the normal expectation of a church-member be clearly defined before membership is actually granted. The cross-bearing side of Christianity is being emphasized and the costs are being met with real and increasing zeal. This trend upward must be carefully encouraged in the future.

Assets and Liabilities—Every wise and well-ordered business establishment constantly counts up its assets and determines its liabilities in order to know just how it stands. If its assets are liquid and greater than its liabilities, it is in good condition, but if its liabilities are pressing and large and cannot be met by the assets in hand, then the condition of the concern is grave. Why not apply the same method of accounting to a religious body such as the local church? Of course, it is realized that if the accounting is done honestly and without fear of anybody, on many sides there will be charges made of all sorts of high crimes and misdemeanors. Nevertheless, the disposition in many churches is to meet the issue and begin to do a thorough piece of work. This augurs well for the future.

It is commonly reported that the local churches enroll a membership of many millions. It is true that the church rolls contain that number of names, but the local churches and many of the denominations cannot honestly, under

present conditions, count upon much more than half that number to do or to give in a way to make the churches useful and productive. In other words, half the assets are not really assets at all, and when closely examined, must be classed as liabilities. One of two things ought to be done with this non-participating part of our enrolment. They should be enlisted, or, after proper spiritual processes have been carried out, in love and honor, their false relationship should be severed. Experience proves that a large part of these non-participating liabilities can be turned into assets, if the participating members will meet an adequate cost in loving, personal ministries to those who need their help.

Our Christian Duty—Many pious phrases will be used when this has been read. All the flimsy excuses and the evasions of truth that help the fearful and the prideful to avoid doing their Christian duty will be repeated. The smug contentment that absorbs the energies of the "let well enough alone" crowd will come into evidence again. But some are on fire with a realization of the grave situation that confronts a half-dead church, and those earnest souls want everyone else to be similarly fired up to realize the present state of affairs. The duty in the matter is plain, and it is certain that in the future a loving and fearless fulfillment of duty will bring strength, not weakness, to the whole body of local churches.

Proof Needed—A church-member should be a member in more than name. No one is so foolishly idealistic as to expect perfection here and now, but there are some elementary signs of spiritual life that are evidence of an attempt to witness before the world that the life belongs to God through faith in Jesus Christ. The local church should help every member to produce such evidences, nay, in all honor, it should insist that in some measure they be produced. It will not do to insist in theory and not in practice. No one believes in the thumb-screw or any other form of force, for all firmly believe in that splendid old

doctrine of voluntarism. However, it is wise to insist that when voluntary association has been sought with a church, the individual shall produce at least some of the fruits of that voluntary association. The local churches should no longer allow hundreds of thousands of people either to openly impugn their own intelligence and that of the organization, or else disclose the falsity of their claims as Christians, thus revealing the rest of us as false to God, to ourselves and to our fellowship. In the future we must justify God's love and our own witnessing love.

Many church leaders are greatly burdened by the conditions that confront the institution, and this is written with a heart full of love for all the membership in the hope that many will undertake a real effort to help every individual enrolled in the membership of any local church. Such an effort born of a revived brotherly love and empowered by the spirit of God and energized by prayer and personal ministry, will change tens of thousands of liabilities or frozen assets into realizable productive assets for the glory of our Lord and Master.

A Required Standard—It is necessary, in order to safeguard the future, to set up spiritual standards and reinforce them by educational processes. A successful future for the church must be built with painstaking care; it will not grow unaided. Trained lay leadership can help largely to solve the problem, and more and more the minister will become a leader and teacher, training his people to do the work of the church. The future of any church rests largely upon the utilization of its personnel in the accomplishment of a well-rounded program that will produce a spiritually-minded church membership. Idleness never helped a soul to grow. Use makes for larger power and a wider horizon.

Money Again—In the building of a bigger and better future, it is necessary to confront another phase of the conditions that prevail in the average local church. The

place of money in the building of the future church is treated in a separate chapter, but to round out this phase of the presentation, it needs to be said that the church of the future must be strong because it will be properly financed through spiritual giving and that every member will support the local church and its world enterprise "as God has prospered him." "An idle dream," some will say, but they will be wrong. A larger and more far-reaching salvation for the individual and for the local church itself depends upon an adequately financed institution in which every member participates as a good steward.

Two Old Methods—The final word concerning the program of the future Church must relate to its prayer life and personal ministries. Those two methods are the central ideas in the plan of the early Church, and comprehend the highest type of enduring evangelism. Nothing has ever taken the place of prayer in the development of spirituality in the individual, or in the Church as a whole. Prayer is no idle gesture, it is a costly process of self-surrender and self-giving. It is God's way and it must be the way of His children. By personal ministries is meant the house-to-house call, with a definite object in view and a prayerful spirit behind and in all the visit. This is a laborious task, but it pays God's wages for every effort put into it. It helps to produce love and watchcare among the members, it increases the sense of oneness and it leads the membership to know each other and to help each other in Christian service.

What Shall Be Done?—We have now come to the place where we want finally to discuss what should be done in the face of our present conditions. The facts have been faced.

The first thing to be done is to admit the truth that we are not really attempting to meet the call of our Lord and Master and do the biggest and best possible piece of work for Him in our world of today. The churches must cease

excusing failure and set out to cure weakness by admitting its existence.

Once that admission is humbly made, the query will arise as to what can be done to change the present conditions wherever failure is indicated in the life of the church. Here is where the temptation will come to pass around the blame from one to another inside and outside the church. When something has gone wrong with a member of a household and the services of the doctor are urgently sought, the medical man does not leave his patient to bleed to death while he fixes the blame for the accident. It is his immediate duty to care for the patient.

Let us care for the needs of the local church and cease trying to shift the blame from the pastor to the officers, then to the finance committee, and from the finance committee of the local church it is placed upon the national organizations, and from there, some will place the blame upon the outside world. With the actual facts in our possession, let the blame rest in each local church. The members who really love God in spirit and in truth will then humbly seek a closer walk with God. First of all, they must store up power through prayer and the study of the Word. Then must come an exchange of personal visits, and prayer should be a part of each visit that is made. "But that is so commonplace people won't"—Don't say it—just do it with the full assurance that where two or three are gathered together, there God is.

Commonplace, time-worn, and simple as this union of prayer with loving ministry is admitted to be, it is God's way of winning people and of helping them.

Great sermons are fine when a prayerful love of people is in the heart of the preacher. A well-organized church is a wonderful help provided the people who project and carry out the plans are prayerful and folk-loving Christians; otherwise the great organization will produce nothing worth while. The future must teach the average church that physical equipment such as buildings and ap-

pliances are the last things needed. They are helpful when the members are inclined to personal ministries and constant participation, but when the chief objects of pride in the life of a church are its edifice and its equipment, and the people are cold and indifferent, those members have wasted the Lord's substance in riotous living.

Leading men and women in the officialdom of the church are a great help, provided they know the secret place of prayer, and love their fellow Christians enough to give them personal ministry, and not pauperize them by assuming the part that belongs to others.

Lack of Love—The weakness in the local church lies in our failure to love one another for Christ's sake. The worst enemy any church has is within, not without its walls. When we love each other enough to pray for and minister to each other, once again, as in the days of the Apostles, we shall have the world about us saying, "How those Christians love one another." No member could then be forgotten or forsaken. Absence would be noticed and the absent followed up. Like and dislike would be forgotten. Non-participation, ignorance, non-residence, could not become a habit because love would soon perceive the danger and remove it. Churches would not remove from foreign-speaking neighborhoods; they would remain to serve and to grow sacrificially.

Three Great Things—A sin-cursed world about us would be a real cause of sorrow and lead to a fulfillment of Christ's plan to save a world because the church loved all men for Christ's sake. Knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ! Yes, knowledge and love! Knowledge, love and prayer! Let us no longer lack those three things in the life of the church. Buildings, organization, numbers, oratory, and all else could give place to this knowledge, love and prayer. When these three rule, they make a place for every needed thing. When brotherly love and prayer really take their right place in the plans and thoughts because the members know God, they will stop passing the

buck and begin instead to pass the bread of life to each other and to a lost world, and it will be a joy to pay their part of the great price.

The local church of the future will build deep and strong in proportion as prayer and personal ministry occupy the lives of the membership.

The Motive Behind It All—The future life of the average church will concern itself to a large extent with the motive behind what it counts as progress and success. To build up a crowd at the expense of Christian principles should not enhance the reputation of any preacher or add to the value of any organization. To bring people into Kingdom purposes and powers will, in the future, be counted as success even if it adds no one to the list of members. In the last analysis, the main objective is the Kingdom of God, and any local organization may well spend itself and, if necessary, pass out of existence, provided its Kingdom task has been well done. All over the land there are examples of such local church history.

God does not expect a perfect performance from His children, but He does expect a high and loving "purpose to perform." With this end in view, He planned the divine institution called the Church, and it was launched with a simple organization to help its membership perform together the services needed to win a world. The future must be marked by simplicity of organization lest the spirit of personal service be lost in the mazes of machinery. Ministry is always more valuable than machinery.

A Program—To converge this whole discussion in a program for the future, it is suggested that:

1. Each church make a thorough survey of its own life and organization.
2. The community and its life around the church be studied.
3. A definite plan of work and program of activities be made each year.

4. Much greater care shall be exercised before new members are admitted.

5. A minimum standard of worship, service and giving be set up and lovingly maintained for all members, based upon a definite educational basis preceding and following regeneration.

6. The work of the minister be studied by each church and a program established for him which will include in his work the training of all lay officers to enable them to produce a worshipping, working and giving membership. The minister's chief task shall be to maintain a spiritual message and ministry.

7. The church shall finance its work upon a maximum basis by making a budget based upon the work to be done, the needs of the local and world situation, and the prosperity of its members.

An Every Member Plan shall be used to enlist the members, with the understanding that there shall be only two classes: those contributing to the support of the church and its missionary program, and those receiving charitable aid from the church because they are too poor to give.

8. The church, in the exercise of its brotherly love, shall, after prayer, by means of personal lay ministries, aim to keep in close touch with every member on the church roll. Where members exhibit an utter lack of fellowship, a loving disciplinary practice shall be used to help them in accordance with the New Testament plan.

9. That the church shall minister to the poor, the afflicted, and the foreign-speaking people in its neighborhood.

Experience has proven that when such processes and plans as these are utilized the local churches justify their continuance and are worth maintaining. Their members are spiritual, the world is their parish, they love one another and they give joyfully and generously without expectation of return in kind, because the Person of Christ is the great Dynamic of their hopes and lives.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS RELATING TO EACH CHAPTER

CHAPTER I—JUSTIFYING CONTINUANCE

1. What question is asked as the reason for writing the book?
2. Name the qualities and powers that would seem to justify the continuance of any local church.
3. Give a definition of spirituality.
4. Why go to church?
5. Give an illustration of Christian love and fellowship.
6. Give the arguments pro and con for justifying the continuance of a local church.
7. How does the local church help the member to coöperate more worthily with God?
8. Contrast some material elements with the spiritual elements in determining the value of a local church.

CHAPTER II—THE STRENGTH OF A CHURCH

1. Of whom is the Church Universal composed? Contrast it with the local church.
2. Discuss the chief element in the strength of the Church Universal.
3. What factors do thoughtful church-members properly count as constituting a successful church?
4. In what way does a church differ from all other organizations?
5. Give two illustrations of the work done by a spiritually-minded church membership.
6. Give four or more of the elements that contribute to the strength of a local church.
7. What process should follow an evangelistic effort?
8. State the relationship that should exist between a church-member and cross-bearing.

CHAPTER III—THE WEAKNESS OF A CHURCH

1. Discuss the relation of the disciple to discipline.
2. State some of the effects of ignorance upon the members of a local church.
3. What relation has giving to missionary work?
4. Name some "fruits of the spirit" that should be evidenced in the lives of church-members.
5. What portion of an average church membership participates in the three essential spiritual functions?
6. Name the purposes of a women's department in the local church.
7. How much blame for the weakness of many churches can reasonably be laid at the door of the lay officer?
8. Give five or more reasons for weakness in a local church.

CHAPTER IV—THE MINISTER

1. Discuss the need for clinical preparation of ministers.
2. What is the prime responsibility of a minister?
3. Name the five things that should be characteristic of a minister's task.
4. Should the minister do all the work of the church? Discuss the reasons for your answer.
5. Discuss the need for a professional consciousness and standard in the ministry.
6. What is said about the accountability of a minister?
7. How does financial dependence hamper the work of a preacher?
8. Why does a local church need a well-trained minister?

CHAPTER V—ITS FINANCES

1. Discuss the relation between salvation and money.
2. What does a lack of money in the church treasury really reveal?
3. Make up a sample church budget.
4. Describe the Every Member Plan from its start to its completion.
5. What should be the relation of a women's organization to the raising of church money? Give the reasons for your answer.
6. Why is group giving objected to?

7. Should women have a place on the major finance group of the church? Why?
8. Discuss week-by-week giving and monthly distribution of receipts.
9. What is the average standard of giving?

CHAPTER VI—THE OBJECTIVES OF ITS PROGRAM

1. What is the first and most serious concern of any local church? Why?
2. Who is responsible for filling the pews? Discuss the reasons for your answer.
3. Describe a group plan.
4. What percentage of its possibilities does the average local church utilize? Of what do those possibilities consist?
5. Cite an example of the result of changed activities on the part of a women's organization.
6. Discuss the lesson conveyed by the illustration of the orchards.
7. What results from a failure to cultivate church-members?
8. Discuss the reasons why money is so constantly mentioned in this study.

CHAPTER VII—BUILDING THE FUTURE PROGRAM

1. Wherein lies the importance of the rural or village church?
2. Give the illustration "Not size that counts." Make its application.
3. In the future program what place belongs to the new member? Why?
4. Discuss assets and liabilities in connection with church-members.
5. What is said about idleness and the utilization of church-members?
6. Name two old methods of the early church and apply them to the future program of the church of today.
7. What shall be done in the face of present conditions?
8. Give as fully as possible the nine points mentioned in a program for the future.

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